

246.
THE MIDDY;

OR,

SCENES FROM THE LIFE

OF

EDWARD LASCELLES.

Embarked, the sails unfurled, the light breeze blew ;
How much has busy memory to review !

BYRON.

35
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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THE MIDDY.

CHAPTER I.

A CHASE.

But soon, too soon, we part with pain,
To sail o'er silent seas again.

MOORE.

THE time, at length, arrived, when we were to separate from our good friends at Canvass Town; and, when all the ties of intimacy, or of love, which had been formed during our brief residence together, were to be rudely, and for ever, snapped asunder.

Those there are, who consider it the happy privilege of a sailor's life, that he glides on from port to port, untrammelled by any of those "bonds of the affections," which bind other men; and that however intimate, or sacred, the ties which he forms, the first weighing of the anchor severs them in an instant, as effectually as if they had never existed.

If the value of friendship consist in the briefness of its duration; and, if there be pleasure in winning hearts, merely to break them, such persons may be right in reckoning this a privilege. For my own part, I have never been the disciple of so cold a philosophy; and, though the natural ardour of my temper, and sociality of my disposition, have led me, from time to time, to form intimacies, both close and tender, I have ever looked upon the fate, which compelled me to break them off, as one of the greatest curses of my profession.

The reader may, perhaps, smile, when I confess that, notwithstanding the seaman's proverbial levity, I have never parted from the friend whom I esteemed, or the girl whom I loved, without experiencing a bitter pang. He may call it romantic, if he will, and if it be romantic, I

glory in the epithet; I glory in the reflection, that love and friendship have never been with me, the conveniences of an hour; that the sacred links have never been severed, but with pain; that I never looked a last adieu with callous indifference; and that, in the language of the poet,

I never spoke the word farewell,
But with an utterance faint and broken;
An earth-sick yearning for the time
When it shall never more be spoken!

The requisite conveyances having been duly prepared, and a sufficient number of draught oxen provided, the emigrants were, at last, reluctantly compelled to leave their comfortable tents in Canvass Town, for the dreary deserts of the African forest; and to exchange the hospitable kindness of their friendly entertainers, for the ferocious hostility of the Caffres. It was arranged that, for their mutual convenience and safety, they should travel in a body; and the day of their departure was already fixed.

Dull and mournful were now, the once merry dinners at the Blue Boar; and Captain Morley exerted himself in vain to promote, even the appearance of cheerfulness. No songs were sung, no lute was heard; all seemed engrossed with the dismal prospect of their journey; and, even the laughing face of the beautiful Emily, was clouded with sorrow. His battles and campaigns, were, no longer, the topic of the good major's discourse; he was, for the most part, silent and moody; and, when he did speak, his theme was "home." The venerable Mr. Settler, too, looked forward to his ultimate destiny with growing concern; he never quitted Captain Morley's side for an instant; but seemed to hang upon him, as his last earthly friend, his sole support on this side the grave. The officers of the Hesperus, shared in the general depression; and all seemed to look forward, to the breaking up of the Canvass Town establishment, with regret.

In the conduct of our first lieutenant, in particular, there was a marked change. His supercilious arrogance, had given place to a constrained submissiveness, of demeanour; and he appeared to be humbled, as he well might, by the thought of his own misconduct.

Indeed, his situation, of late, must have been, at best, extremely uncomfortable. Ever since the disgraceful

scene at Simon's Bay, the intercourse, which his mess-mates held with him, was cold and distant; and Captain Morley never spoke to him, save on matters connected with the business of the ship. Although, no open marks of disrespect were shown by any, he could not but feel, that he was despised by all; a dreadful feeling, even to a heart the most hardened, and indifferent. A man may bear, with the erect, and dignified front, of conscious rectitude, the bitterest malice of his fellow-men; but, where is the panoply of proof, that can resist the poisoned dart of merited contempt!

One morning, shortly before the final departure of the emigrants, the now submissive first-lieutenant, desirous, perhaps, to escape from his present truly uncomfortable situation, came to Captain Morley, and told him that he was anxious to accompany his father into the interior, for the purpose of seeing him safely settled; and, that as he had, of late, been labouring under a disorder in the chest, which, as the doctor could certify, was of a most malignant nature, he hoped there would be no objections to his being invalided, and left behind.

Captain Morley, having satisfied himself, that the poor man was actually labouring under the complaint to which he alluded; and, being willing to afford him an opportunity of repairing, in some measure, the deadly injury he had already inflicted, on his venerable parent, agreed, without much reluctance, to his proposal, and he was invalided accordingly.

This arrangement, necessarily, caused an important blank in the ship's books; and several of the youngsters were looking forward, with much satisfaction, to the prospect of temporary promotion. But, the active benevolence of Captain Morley, had other views; and, as soon as the necessary formalities had been observed, he sent for Rowley Neville.

"Well, Mr. Neville," he said; "now that the time of your departure is drawing near, do you still look forward with pleasure, to the prospect of your settlement in the interior of this desert country? I should have thought, that a youth of your disposition, would have preferred the haunts of civilized men."

"Indeed, Captain Morley," replied Neville, *I do* prefer them. My being here, as a wandering emigrant, is the

result not of choice, but of destiny. There was a time, when I looked to the broad blue sea, and not to the bleak desert, as the scene of my future career; and, I vainly dreamed, of ending my life in the service of my country. Events, however, of which you are already aware, have frustrated these fondly cherished hopes. It was not, indeed, without a pang, that I relinquished them. But I *did* relinquish them; and, for some months before my arrival here, I had habituated myself to bow, with submission, to my destiny. But the sight of your gallant ship, with the society of yourself and your excellent officers, have revived within me, all my dormant enthusiasm for my profession; and, I confess, that I have of late looked, with a repining eye, on the fate which has torn me from it. Oh! the sea, the sea, the broad blue sea, the element of my love and my adoption; I would sacrifice all I possess, to float once more upon its briny bosom! Yes! willingly would Rowley Neville undertake the meanest of a sailor's duties—but—there is one, whom he would not wish to make the wife of a foremast-man. Forgive me, Captain Morley; these are vain regrets! My path is a dreary one, but it is lighted up by the bright star of love; and, I shall go into my exile with a sorrowful heart, indeed, but not as one without hope."

"In a young man of your disposition, Mr. Neville," replied Captain Morley, "I was prepared for this burst of enthusiasm; and, I have a proposal to make, which, I trust, will meet with your acquiescence. My first lieutenant has been invalided; and he is to be left behind us here. If you choose to accept of an acting order from me, to fill the vacant post, it is most heartily at your service. Of course, you are aware, that the appointment is entirely of a temporary nature, and that you will be superseded, when we communicate with the admiral; but it may, at least, have the effect, of bringing you into notice; and, if you are willing to trust your fortunes with me, I think my influence with the Board at home, will be sufficient to prevent your remaining long, without a more permanent situation."

The dark eye of Rowley Neville flashed with delight, and astonishment, as he listened to this unexpected proposal. He grasped the hand of the excellent commander, but did not speak.

“If you have any scruples, Mr. Neville,” continued Morley, “I trust you will reject my offer, with the same candour with which it is made.”

“Scruples !” cried Neville, as he wrung his benefactor’s hand ; “to agree with your generous proposal, is to gratify the fondest wish of my heart. But, Captain Morley, I am a poor man, and I can never reward you for this unmerited kindness.”

“The approval of his own heart, Mr. Neville, is the most enviable reward to which a man can aspire. But, do not suppose, that I have taken this step, entirely without selfish motives. We are going on a cruise, which will require much vigilance and activity ; and, I know that, in you, I shall find an able, and experienced officer. Besides, in serving you, I serve an old and valued friend of my own. Lieutenant Harwood, and I, were engaged together, in the Mediterranean.”

“You know Harwood then ?” said Neville.

“I have reason to know him,” replied Morley. “He received the wounds which caused him to retire from the service, in a gallant, and successful attempt, to rescue myself, and some of my brother officers, from the hands of the enemy ; and that, too, under very peculiar circumstances. But, of this another time. Meanwhile, have your traps conveyed on board ; to-morrow, I shall introduce you to my officers, as acting first lieutenant of the *Hesperus*.”

May a rewarding providence, shower down its choicest blessings on your head, benevolent Morley ! To do good, has ever been the chosen maxim of your life !

The day, fixed for the final departure of the emigrants, at length arrived. Every thing that could tend to promote their safety, or comfort, during their arduous journey, was provided ; and they set forth, a mournful company, attended by the best wishes of those they left behind. As soon as they were gone, Captain Morley gave orders to strike the tents ; and, before the shades of evening closed upon the landscape, not a vestige remained, of the once lively and bustling Canvass Town.

No time was now lost, in getting the *Hesperus* under weigh ; and we were soon, once more, ploughing “the glad waters of the dark blue sea.”

Our destination was the Mauritius ; and, after a prospe-

rous passage, of about three weeks, we made that delicious island.

As we ran between Gunner's Quoin and the shore, every glass was pointed in the direction of Amber Island ; which, the rich fancy of Saint Pierre, has rendered memorable, as the spot of the ill-fated Virginia's shipwreck.

The whole of the appalling scene, as described by the graphic pen of that accomplished writer, was, at the moment, vividly pictured in my imagination. The black clouds, that enveloped the tempestuous atmosphere ; the white foam of the agitated sea, as it rolled its enormous billows shoreward, tearing asunder, plank by plank, the sparless hull of the stranded St. Gerand ; the solitary female figure, standing on the poop of the fated vessel, and stretching out its arms in the attitude of supplication ; the thrilling cry of the spectators, "*C'est Virginie !*" the vain struggles of the gallant Paul, to reach the wreck ; the mountain-like billow, by which the vessel and the figure, were finally engulfed ; the shriek of horror from the shore, that pierced even the roaring of the tempest—all was painted, in vivid colours, on my fancy.

But there was nothing, in the scene before us, calculated to remind me of this dreadful storm ; of which I had often read the description, with such thrilling interest. The surface of the bright blue water, was gently curled, by a perfume-laden breeze ; and the beach, which had ever been associated, in my imagination, with black clouds, howling winds, dashing spray, and the mangled bodies of wrecked mariners, was now cheerfully lighted up, by the glad rays of the mid-day sun. A soft, summer-day, stillness, invested the whole scene ; and, had it not been, that the dangerous reefs, which extend round every part of this coral-bound coast, were easily to be traced by the change of colour, visible in the surface of the water, Amber Island might have seemed the very haven of safety and peace. It is these hidden reefs, that make the approach to the Mauritius so perilous, and render it necessary for the watchful mariner to be ever on his guard. Many stately ships have met their death, by trusting to the treacherous stillness of the water—

—— floating darkling down the tide,
Unconscious of the rocks o'er which they glide.

After a tedious warp up, from the Bell Buoy, we moored the *Hesperus* in the Trou Fanfaron, or inner harbour; where the ships of war usually lie, during the hurricane months, or for the purpose of refitting.

Here, we had ample opportunity of looking about us; as, after six o'clock, each evening, Captain Morley granted a general leave, to such of the officers as were not on duty, and to a third part of the ship's company. And, certainly, there are few spots, that can vie with this delicious island, for beauty of scenery, and salubrity of climate. Indeed, were it not for the severe hurricanes, by which it is occasionally visited, it would be a terrestrial paradise.

From the ship, as we were running along-shore, the *coup-d'œil*, which the island presented, was lovely in the extreme. The gently undulated water, rose and fell, on a smooth beach of the whitest sand, which was lined on its landward side, by an extended turf of the most brilliant verdure. Beyond this, numerous clusters of small, cheerful cottages, denoting the fishing stations of the richer planters, peeped out, from beneath the shade of graceful cocoa-nut trees, and umbrageous palms. The canoes of the fishermen, as they glided along the inner edge of the coral reefs, in search of shells or bait, for the sport of the evening, contributed greatly to the general effect of the picture.

On shore, I spent my time delightfully. The general on the station, chanced to be an acquaintance of my father; and, learning by some means or other, that I was on board the *Hesperus*, he sought me out, and introduced me to his family. Through his kindness, I also became acquainted with the worthy governor, Sir R——t F——r; and, many were the happy hours, I spent at Reduit, and Mont Plaisir.*

But it was not to dream away the time in harbour, that the *Hesperus* was sent to the Mauritius. In consequence of the inactivity of the ship, which previously occupied the station, the slave-trade had increased to an alarming

* This is not the only occasion, during my life, on which I have experienced the benefit of being "the son of a worthy sire." My honoured parent! would that I could boast, of having merited, for my own sake, the many kindnesses, that have often been conferred on me, for yours!

extent; and the most energetic measures were now requisite, for its suppression. Encouraged by the inaction of the previous government cruiser, vessels of all countries had engaged in this nefarious traffic, which they carried on with the most dauntless effrontery. It is true, that, besides the British ship, several French colonial men-of-war cruisers were employed, off Bourbon, in the preventive service; but, the commanders of these vessels, had, for the most part, friends or relations connected with the contraband trade, in the interests of which, accordingly, they had little scruple of tacitly engaging, as Trapbois says, "for a consideration."

Accordingly, for several years, there had been scarcely any check upon the slave-trade; and the seas, in the neighbourhood of this station, were considered the fairest field of illicit enterprise, in all the eastern ocean.

Captain Morley, however, determined to let those "free traders" know, that the — frigate no longer occupied the station, and that, in the jolly *Hesperus*, they had another sort of customer to deal with.

Shortly after our arrival at the Mauritius, he planned a cruise in search of slavers; during which he proposed to visit Bourbon, Madagascar, and the Seychelles. It was necessary, however, in order to defeat any attempts, that might be made to put the slaveships on their guard, that we should keep our intended route as secret as possible. Accordingly, though Madagascar was the ostensible place of our destination, and though it was generally understood to be such on shore; we had no sooner run past Bourbon, than we shaped our course for the islands of Providence and Coitive.

As we were running round the Isle de Bourbon, we were hailed at different parts of the island, by three small French cruisers. But though these vessels were engaged in the same service as ourselves, Morley thought it imprudent, for the reasons above stated, to confide in them, so we gave each of them a different answer as to our route. Accordingly, in the space of twenty-four hours, we were spoken to as "coming from Madagascar," "as going to Madagascar," and "as coming from the Seychelles." This we afterwards found, was by no means an unnecessary precaution; as the commanders of these very craft, were actually, at the time, in constant, and friendly com-

munication, with vessels engaged in the contraband trade.

We had passed Jean de Nove and Providence, and were within about two hundred miles of Coitive, when one morning, soon after day-break, the look-out at the mast-head, announced, "A sail right a-head!"

"What does she look like?" cried Captain Morley, who was on deck at the moment.

"She seems a rakish sort of a brig, sir; under top-gallant sails—courses down."

"Which way is she standing?"

"The same as we are sir."

Captain Morley, having gone to the mast-head, and examined the craft through his glass, again descended, and called the first lieutenant.

"She looks suspicious, Mr. Neville," he said; "yet her canvass is white, and she appears too taunt for a slaver. She must either be a yankee, who has no business here, or one of those idle French cruisers; but, whatever she is, we'll over-haul her. Pipe all hands, make sail, Mr. Parsons; and, Mr. Neville, set every stitch of canvass that will draw."

The prospect of a chase was delightful; and, in a few moments, all was life and activity.

The wind chanced at the time, to be extremely light; but, as it was upon the beam, we were in a fine position for a stern chase. Under the influence of the additional canvass, the *Hesperus* mended her rate considerably, and bounded gallantly away. The brig, evidently, had either not observed us as yet, or had assumed the appearance of carelessness, in order to lull our suspicions; for she still continued, steering on the same course, and under the same easy sail as before.

With a little more wind we should certainly have come up with her, hand over hand. But the breeze continued tantalizingly light, and baffled every attempt we made to increase our speed beyond the rate of ordinary sailing. All looked anxiously to windward, to ascertain if there was any prospect of a breeze; and Mr. Black fidgeted about the deck, seeming very much inclined to break through his own rule, and whistle. He, however, contented himself, with the less noisy mode of invoking the fickle element; giving the mizen mast each time he passed it, in his walk, a friendly scratch with his finger.

“ Oh ! for a stiff breeze ! ” was the general cry of us youngsters ; “ and we ’ ll let her see the Hesperus walk ! ”

But, it was all in vain ; the wind continued provokingly light, and, we could get no more out of the lazy ship, than a scanty six knots an hour. Still, however, we were evidently making on the brig ; as she had not, as yet, set an additional inch of canvass, or adopted any other measures to mend her rate.

We had gained upon her, perhaps, about a mile, without her having giving any symptoms, that she was aware of our design. At last, however, seeing us steering straight for her, she, apparently, took alarm, and made sail ; keeping away, a point or two, to let her studding-sails draw.

She now mended her rate considerably ; and, it was not without difficulty, that we held our own with her.

The wind, meantime, as is often the case in those seas, continued extremely variable, and unsteady ; coming and going, in short gusts ; each of which, after remaining with us for about fifteen or twenty minutes, would pass onwards, and leave us, for the next half hour, nearly becalmed. The same breeze, that had carried us forward, for some time at a tolerable rate, having suddenly left us almost motionless, would ripple the surface of the ocean as it passed along ; and, soon filling the sails of the chase, run away with her, in a most tantalizing manner. Having favoured the chase for an equally short period, the inconstant gale would again resume its onward course, and leave her, like ourselves, nearly becalmed. Then, once more the sails of the Hesperus would fill, with a fresh gust ; and away she would bound, bearing rapidly down on the now nearly motionless brig ; till the coquetting breeze, again forsook us, and hurried forward to woo, once more, the favour of our opponent.

Thus, it seemed to be altogether a matter of chance, which should gain the superiority ; and, the crew of the Hesperus, gave ample symptoms, of genuine nautical impatience.

Towards ten o ’ clock in the morning, however, it blew steadier ; and, from that time, till four in the afternoon, we were going seven knots, and evidently making on the chase. The distance between us, continued, gradually, to diminish, till it amounted to little more than three miles ; and every one seemed certain, that she would be ours before dark.

But, alas! for the inconstant element! Towards evening, the wind got back to its old tricks; and, in spite of trimming ship, by slinging shot in the hammocks, hanging up chests, shifting guns, and so forth, when sunset arrived, we had not gained an additional inch.

Now came the ticklish period; as an hour's darkness, or rather more, must intervene, before we could be favoured by the light of the moon. The probability was, that the chase would take the usual advantage of the obscurity, and alter her course; in which case we must inevitably lose her.

As we were considering, what it would be advisable for us to do, in such an event, the sun sunk suddenly beneath the horizon, and total darkness speedily closed around us.

Every night glass was now put in requisition; but, so complete was the obscurity, that not a trace of the brig could be discovered. In the imaginations of the anxious lookers, indeed she was occasionally descried; but it was too certain, that it was only in their imaginations. The most practised eye could discover nothing, in the darkness; and the repeated assertions, that "she was here," and "she was there," were soon suffered to pass unnoticed.

To one man only, who had the reputation of being able to discover objects at night, farther than any of his ship-mates, Captain Morley seemed inclined to pay some attention. This man, after looking long and anxiously through a night-glass, declared that he saw the chase quite plainly.

"Where is she?" said Morley.

"Right off the spritsail lee yard-arm, sir!" replied the man.

"The d—l she is!" cried the captain, "then she must be bearing up; and, if we dont follow her example, she will undoubtedly give us the slip."

Morley proceeded aft, apparently for the purpose of giving directions to bear up; but, instead of doing so, he privately desired the quartermaster to alter the ship's course, a point or two; by which means he hoped to ascertain whether or not the man were deceived in his assertion.

When the vessel had materially shifted her position, he returned to his informant, who still kept prying eagerly through his night-glass.

“Where is she now?”

“Right off the spritsail lee yard-arm, sir!” was again the reply.

By another private hint to the quartermaster, the course of the ship was altered still more; so that the position of her head was now entirely changed. The night-seer, meantime, unconscious of any alteration, kept steady to his glass.

“Where is she now?” inquired Morley.

“Right off the spritsail lee yard-arm, sir!” once more replied the man.

“Keep the ship to her course again!” cried Morley to the quartermaster; “we might as well be chasing the jib-sheet block, if we listen to the assertions of these nocturnal prophets.”

The ship was, accordingly, brought round to her former position; and the outwitted night-glass-man slunk away, considerably abashed.

The moon, at length, made her wished-for appearance; and, as she gradually shed her light over the surface of the water, we discovered the brig, to our inexpressible pleasure and surprise, exactly in the same position which she held, when we lost sight of her at sunset. What her reasons could be, for not taking the usual advantage, which darkness, in such cases, affords, we were at a loss to conjecture; unless, perhaps, it might be, that she placed such implicit reliance on her sailing qualities, as to feel quite sure of walking away from us.

The wind was now as variable and as unsteady as ever; and, all night long, we continued in a most uncertain state, gaining one half hour and losing the next.

Towards morning, however, the breeze continued so long in our favour, that we crept up with the chase, and contemplated firing a gun at her. But our good fortune was of short continuance. Suddenly, from a steady seven knot rate, we were reduced to a comparative calm; and away went the brig, her sails filled by the very breeze, which, a few minutes before, had sighed through the shrouds of the Hesperus. In the course of scarcely half an hour, she regained her old position, of two or three miles a-head.

The chase was now getting serious. I had not left the hammock-netting for ten minutes, at a time, since we first

got her within sight of the sextant; and I was perfectly tired of watching our progress, now gaining, now losing. At ten A.M., it was acknowledged, that the *Hesperus* was only holding her own with her; which, of course, was equivalent to being beat; and, from the long faces of the officers and crew, it was evident, that the hope of catching her, was fast ebbing away.

Noon came; and, from our observations, it appeared, that the tables were so far turned, that, instead of our creeping up with the chase, the chase was slowly creeping away from us. This was truly tantalizing: for, as we had already crowded every stitch of canvass that would draw, and had trimmed, in every possible manner, we were satisfied that we could not now mend our rate of sailing.

But the worst of our ill-fortune was to come. While we were exerting ourselves, in vain, to hold our own, the wind suddenly fell, and left us almost becalmed. The brig, being somewhat to leeward, continued to hold the breeze, after it had forsaken us, and away she went, dashing through the water, at a most enviable rate. We watched her, with extreme impatience, as she scudded rapidly along; while we ourselves, were lying, with hardly steerage way, and without the slightest capability of following her up.

She had already, to our inexpressible chagrin, increased the distance between us, to somewhat more than four miles; when suddenly, and without the slightest warning, we saw her sails, which had hitherto been sleeping, begin to flap. The breeze had once more forsaken her, and there she lay; becalmed like ourselves.

"All hands out boats!" was Captain Morley's instantaneous order. "Call the boats' crews away, Mr. Parsons."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the portly boatswain, from the bottom of his chest; and, immediately, his shrill call sounded the appropriate note, through every corner of the ship.

In less time than most landsmen would be inclined to credit, every boat in the vessel, was manned and armed; and off they started for the brig, which now seemed ours, to all intents and purposes.

Strangways had command of this expedition, and I

was in great hopes that I should be allowed to accompany him ; but, Captain Morley would not permit me to leave the sextant, so I was sent back to my old seat in the hammock-netting

The crews pulled lustily along, and the boats were already within about two miles of the brig, when fate, which seemed determined to baffle all our exertions, again interfered. As we were anxiously watching the progress of the boats, a breeze sprung up ; not such a breeze as had, hitherto, been teasing us, but a fine, fresh, rattling, eleven-knot breeze. In one instant, the sails of both vessels were filled ; and away scudded the brig, leaving our unfortunate "small craft" to follow her at their leisure.

"Confound the boats !" cried Morley ; "what could tempt me to hoist them out ! Steer straight for them, Mr. Neville ; and let them be hoisted in again, with all despatch."

"Ay, ay, sir !" responded the first lieutenant, shaping the course of the vessel as he was directed ; but, before we had overtaken the boats, and whilst we hove to to recover them, we had the satisfaction of seeing the chase, walk, unforbidden, away.

When we were once more ready to make sail on her, the brig had got a long start of us ; and, from our observations with the sextant, she seemed very much inclined to keep it. She crawled away, more regularly than she had hitherto done, since the commencement of the chase ; and, as she still continued under the same canvass as before, we were a little at a loss to account for her mended rate ; the breeze, apparently, favouring us both, in an equal degree.

"They've altered the trim of that craft, sir," said Black to Morley ; "and, I'm blessed, but I think they have been playing with us, all this time."

"They shall find it odd play," was the captain's only reply ; "if this wind holds, and the sticks will stand it !"

Notwithstanding all our exertions, however, she was evidently leaving us rapidly ; and, if she *had* altered her trim, as the master maintained, she had certainly done so to some purpose. Morley watched her anxiously for some time ; and, after repeated observations, being satisfied, that she was every moment getting a-head, he, at

last, seemed to give up his chance of success, as hopeless.

“Come, Mr. Neville,” he said to the acting first lieutenant; “let us go down below, and have a bottle of La Fitte. We are going to be well beat; and I, for one, don’t like to see it. Keep a bright look-out, youngster,” he continued, addressing himself to me; “and, if we *do* gain on her, let me know.”

So saying, he descended, with his lieutenant, to the cabin; and, no sooner was he gone, than the cluster of middies on the forecastle, relieved from the restraint of his presence, began to vent their spleen; cursing and swearing heartily, at “the little black brute, that dared to take the shine out of such a clipper as the *Hesperus*!”

“Strange!” said Strangways, who had been observing the brig carefully with the sextant, and found, from each observation, that she was increasing the distance between us. “It is very strange! At the commencement of the chase, we seemed her superior in sailing, and, latterly, we have been at least equal to her; but *now*, the devil’s in’t, if we can hold our own with her! D—n me, if I can understand it!”

“Understand it!” said Black; who piqued himself upon his superior nautical skill, and thought it impossible, that any manœuvre could be practised, of which *he* had not a most complete comprehension. “Understand it, sir! why it is all owing to her trim! I’ll lay my life, she has not been idle, either above or below, for the last hour.—Ay, ay, sir! see what trimming ship does!”

“Trimming d—l!” replied Strangways, in a peevish tone. “Haven’t *we* been trimming too; and what have we made of it? I’ll be d—d, if it is not all chance, and our own ill luck, blast her!”

“Well, well, sir,” said Black, “you must, of course, know more of these matters than I do; though, maybe, I’m the older sailor of the two, for all that!” And he raised his glass, with an air of self-importance, to his eye, as if to put an end to the altercation.

The indignant master continued, for some time, to examine the brig carefully through his glass; and a smile of triumph played round his lips, when he, at last, lowered the instrument from his eye, and handed it to Strangways.

“I suppose, sir,” he said, in the self-satisfied tone of

a man, who has unexpectedly found some irrefragable argument, to support a favourite position; "I suppose, sir, you'll maintain, that she's not trimming now!"

"By heaven!" cried Strangways, when he had raised the glass, and contemplated the chase, for a moment.— "By heaven! they are cutting away an anchor from her bows!"

"Ay, ay, sir," said Black, in a tone, half of derision, half of triumph. "*See what trimming ship does!*"

Every glass was now pointed in the direction of the chase; and she was distinctly seen, to cut away from her bows, first one, and then a second, anchor.

"He is a knowing fellow that," said Strangways; "and I suppose she now intends to leave us, and nothing else!"

"Ay, ay, sir," reiterated Black, with the same triumphant smile. "*SEE WHAT TRIMMING SHIP DOES!*"

The sextants were now laid aside in despair; no one being anxious to watch the progress, of what was, at last, considered our certain discomfiture. I, however, still kept my sextant upon the chase. My first observation was, that, by cutting away her anchors, she had *not* mended her rate. She did not continue to gain on the Hesperus, so rapidly as she had previously done; on the contrary, she rather lost way.

After a few minutes had elapsed, this was still more apparent; and the Hesperus began, gradually, but decidedly, to gain upon her.

Having repeated my observations, several times, with great care, in order to satisfy myself that I was not deceived; and still finding that we were making on her, more and more; I jumped out of the netting, and ran down to the captain; brandishing the sextant, triumphantly, in my hand.

"Well, youngster," said Morley; "what's in the wind now?"

"We are coming up with her, hand over hand, sir," I cried, in ecstasy. "She has cut both her anchors from her bows, and seems to have spoiled her trim!"

Up started, both captain and lieutenant, at this unexpected intelligence; and, having first made me swallow a glass of wine "for luck," we all hurried together on deck.

As soon as we were above, Morley snatched the sext-

ant from my hand, and, at a single glance, satisfied himself that my statement was correct. We continued gradually to overhaul her; and the breeze remained as steady as we could desire. Towards six p. m., we had diminished the distance between us, to about a mile.

“Give her a shot with the long nine!” cried Morley; and, immediately, the report of the piece, rung through the rigging.

At this salute, the chase made a movement, which led us to suppose, that she was rounding to.

In this, however, we were deceived. She, on the contrary, put her helm up again, and kept more away than she had hitherto done; hoisting, at the same time, French colours. On this new point, her starboard lower studding-sails drawing, she, for some time, seemed to hold us a better tug. But it was all in vain; the *Hesperus* had got the breeze she liked, and would not be denied. The distance between us, was still, gradually, diminishing.

Sunset again approached; but, as the chase was now but a short way a-head, we had little fear of her escaping, under cover of the darkness. One circumstance was particularly in our favour, for a night run. We had a mass of dark clouds behind us; and, before her, the sky was bright and clear; so that, long after we should be completely hidden from her view, her spars and rigging would be distinctly visible to us; standing out in relief against the horizon.

Not reckoning upon this important difference in our situations, when darkness set in, the brig seemed to conclude, that she was as much hidden from us, as we were from her. Accordingly, by the assistance of our night-glasses, we soon observed her cut away her stern boat; and, placing a lantern in it, she let it go adrift. The object of this manœuvre was to lead us astray; for, no sooner was she clear of the boat, than she immediately bore up several points, and set her larboard studding-sails.

But it would not do. We merely ran up to the boat, to ascertain if any unfortunate negroes had been turned adrift in her; but, finding it empty, we again followed close on the chase.

It was now towards nine o'clock in the evening; and, as we were, at the time, within little more than half a mile of her, we fired a few muskets at, or rather near her.

"Well, Mr. Black," said Morley; "which of us, do you think, is playing with the other now?"

"It was all owing to her cutting away her anchors, sir!" replied Black, unwilling to give up the point of "trimming," on which he had, in a manner, staked his nautical credit.

"To be sure, it was," chuckled Strangways, who chanced to be at the master's elbow, unknown to him. "To be sure, it was! SEE WHAT TRIMMING SHIP DOES!"

The disconcerted master, struck his clenched fist against the palm of his hand, and shuffled off to another part of the deck; muttering between his teeth, his usual emphatic clencher of an argument, in which he was worsted—"D—n this!"

We continued popping away at the chase, for some time, with our muskets; but she did not pay the slightest attention to them.

"Give her the long nine again!" cried Morley. And, no sooner was the gun discharged, than down came her studding-sails, so rapidly, that we almost fancied some of the spars had been shot away.

She now hove to, and the old Hesperus was speedily alongside of her.

"What brig's that?"

"La Fortune."

"Where from?"

"Zanzibar."

"Where bound?"

"Bourbon."

"What cargo?"

"Les Noirs."

We were now all right. Strangways was ordered to board, and take charge of her; and I was one, of three midshipmen, appointed to accompany him.

We started, in the gig, of which Wolfe was coxswain, to take possession; while the men intended for the prize, were getting their hammocks, and so forth, in readiness. As we neared her, the fetid smell she exhaled, was insufferable; and from the crowded appearance of her decks, she seemed to have a good cargo.

She proved to be a fine, raking brig, pierced for fourteen, but carrying only eight carronades. Besides her own complement of twenty-five men, exclusive of officers,

she had on board, three hundred and forty negroes; and she must have been intended for many trips, as she was provided with ample stores for four years. She had been fitted out at Nantz; from which port she had sailed, only a few months previously.

We had chased her for upwards of forty hours, during which time we had run nearly two hundred miles; and, throughout the whole run, we were never more than five miles distant from her; for the most part, not much above two.

Completely worn out, with constant watching during so protracted a period, as soon as the preliminary arrangements were made, I wrapped my cloak about me; and, throwing myself on deck, managed, with the assistance of a cigar, and some genuine Nantz, to overcome the filthy effluvia with which I was surrounded, and to obtain a little refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER II.

THE PAINTED PETREL.

Aspice, quam subito, marcet, quod floruit ante !

Aspice, quam subito, quod stetit ante, cadit !

Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pendit ;

Ipsaque vita, suæ semina mortis habet !

MONASTIC INSCRIPTION AT BRAGA.

SOUND and unbroken, is the slumber induced by watching and fatigue. The weary mariner needs no downy cushion on which to pillow his head. With the bare deck for his couch, lulled by the winds, and rocked by the waters, he enjoys a repose, which curtailed monarchs well might envy.

The day had already dawned before I awoke; and there was an ominous redness in the east, which betokened squally weather. The sun, the lower part of whose disc had not yet emerged from beneath the horizon, poured a struggling stream of lurid light, through the thick mass of murky vapours, with which the atmosphere was loaded. A heavy haze hung over the ocean. The leaden-coloured surface of the water was of a mirrory smoothness; and a

misty, ill-defined track of burnished light, extended from the ship to the disc of the sun ; seeming to afford a golden pathway, by which we might approach the burning orb of heaven. Not a breath of air sighed among the cordage ; and we lay within a cable's length of the Hesperus ; our sails hanging loosely from the spars, and dripping with the heavy dew of the morning.

" You have slept long, Edward," said Strangways, coming up to the place where I stood ; " but, after the severe fagging you have had, I did not wish to disturb you."

" I hope I have not outslept my duty, sir," I replied.

" Had there been any chance of your doing so," said the lieutenant, " I should have taken care to rouse you. But your services could easily be dispensed with. Since the crew of this craft were transferred on board the Hesperus, there has been nothing for it, but walking the deck and whistling for a breeze."

" What sort of vessel does she turn out to be, sir ?"

" A smart craft enough ; of about two hundred tons, and well appointed and provisioned ; but in a vilely dirty state, as you may see."

I now stepped below, to reconnoitre.

The cabin was in an extremely filthy condition ; and the fetid smell that arose from below was perfectly sickening. The slaves had not yet been removed on deck ; and I could not resist the curiosity I felt to take a peep at that receptacle of human misery, the description of which had so often made me shudder—the hold of a slave-ship.

I found it to be a large commodious place, but dark, close, and airless ; and the steamy, fetid breaths, that met me at the hatchway, were almost suffocating. So closely were the wretched inmates packed, that there was not sufficient space for them to lie down ; and, as the extreme height of the hold, between the beams, did not exceed four feet and a half, they could not, of course, stand erect. The poor creatures were, for the most part huddled together in a sitting posture, without the power of promoting their comfort, even by an occasional change of position. And then the dismal groans, and the choked, struggling sound of suffocation, and the mingled voice of anger and despair, that met my ear, were truly appalling. Death must, indeed have been sweet, compared to life in

such a situation; and a thousand fold must the misery of the wretched sufferers have been increased, by the recollection that, but a few weeks before, they had enjoyed "the range of the broad mountain side," and breathed the free air of their own native forests. It is a reflection humbling to humanity, that it was man

Who thus pent up his fellow men,
Like beasts within their squalid den!

In the course of the day, a breeze sprung up; and we proceeded in company with the *Hesperus*, on our return to the Mauritius; which island we made, in about a fortnight, after encountering some very severe weather.

During the passage, the slaves were kept, as much as possible, on deck, and every attention was paid to their cleanliness, and the wholesomeness of their food; but, notwithstanding all our exertions, we could not stop the ravages of the dysentery, which carried them off in great numbers. Scarcely a day passed during which we had not several deaths; some caused by disease, and some by strangulation; for the wretched creatures would often quarrel with each other in the hold for an inch of room, in disputing which, they would fight with as much animosity, as neighbouring potentates for a contested province. When we landed them at Fort Tonneliers, we had lost twenty-five of their original number.

At Port Louis, our prize was duly delivered over, condemned, and purchased by the colonial government; to be employed in preventing the very traffic which it had recently been engaged in carrying on. The slaves were either bound apprentices to government, or sent as soldiers to Sierra Leone.

The *Hesperus*, having sustained considerable damage, in the gales she had encountered during her last trip, was, immediately on our arrival at the Mauritius, taken into the *Trou Fanfaron*, to be refitted. As the completion of the necessary repairs, however, was likely to occupy a considerable time, Captain Morley engaged two small colonial vessels; and, having officered and manned them from the *Hesperus*, he sent them to cruise to windward of the island.

To one of these, the *Albatross*, of which Strangways had the command, I was appointed. She was a smart little vessel, of between forty-five and fifty tons; carrying

four small guns. Neville, with a crew of six men, commanded the other; which was named the Petrel, and rated little more than from twenty to twenty-five tons. It was resolved that the two vessels should cruise in company, in order to try their respective merits; and, by comparison, to ascertain their most advantageous trim.

The Petrel was, without exception, one of the most lovely little vessels I ever beheld. Her build was perfectly symmetrical. Her hull was moulded, with that nice attention to the sinking and swelling of the parts, which constitutes beauty in the eye of a seaman. Her masts and spars were so taper and delicate, that they almost seemed as if they had been executed by some consummate workman, as a cabinet-model of his art; and her snow-white canvass was cut with the most exquisite precision. When at rest, she resembled some beautiful sea-fowl, sleeping among the waves; when in motion, "she walked the waters like a thing of life;" and the ease and grace with which she bounded on her course, seemed almost to entitle her to the eulogium of the Latin poet—*incedit regina*. For neatness and order, to use a seaman's favourite phrase, she was "quite a lady's work-box;" and the gay manner in which her cabin was fitted up, and ornamented with gilded cornices, shining panels, and embroidered hangings, had obtained for her the fanciful appellation of "THE PAINTED PETREL."

For several days we continued cruising about, without meeting a single suspicious sail; and we should have found our situation dull enough, if we had not contrived to relieve its monotony by trying each other's powers of sailing. Many a race we ran, in which our success was various; though, with a light breeze, and in smooth water, the Petrel had always the advantage. Our turn came when it blew hard, for we could then carry a heavier press of canvass than the slender spars of our beautiful rival were able to bear.

One evening, after we had been about a week upon the cruise, the sky, towards sunset, having a threatening appearance, we took a good offing, and lay to, close together, about twelve miles to windward of the island.

I chanced to have the morning watch on board the Albatross; and Strangways was walking the deck, at my side, about day-dawn. The grey light of morning had

already rendered visible the various objects on board, and was gradually extending itself over the surface of the water. The lovely little Petrel was riding buoyantly at our side ; so near that we could distinctly hear the foot-fall of the watch upon her deck.

As surrounding objects became more and more discernible, Strangways and myself strained our gaze in every direction. Many leagues of the more distant waters were still veiled in obscurity ; and we seemed to form, as it were, the centre of a little circle of grey light, beyond the verge of which all was impenetrable darkness.

The gloom of the black barrier that thus shut in our prospect was unvaried and unbroken, save only in one spot ; where something, resembling a greyish cloud, was indistinctly visible, partly relieved against the murky background, partly enveloped in the surrounding obscurity.

This object, uninteresting as it may appear, at once rivetted our attention. At first, it was obscure and ill-defined ; but gradually, as the light advanced upon it, it assumed a more decided character. The misty, grey colour, and vapoury outline, which indicated a cloud, passed into something resembling the sails of a ship ; and as the darkness melted more and more away, a large brig, under a press of canvass, was gradually revealed to us.

“ I do not like the look of that craft,” said Strangways to me. “ She is running down for the island with more haste than betokens honesty, and she is evidently attempting to cut in between us and the shore.”

“ Had we not better hail Mr. Neville, sir,” I replied, “ and give her chase ?”

Neville, however, had anticipated us ; and I had scarcely spoken when we were hailed by him.

“ We must have a nearer look at that brig,” he cried ; “ and there is no time to be lost.”

“ Ay, ay,” replied Strangways. “ Make sail, with all the despatch you can. Turn the hands up, Mr. Lascelles ; make sail !”

It now became a point of rivalry, between ourselves and the Petrel, which should soonest get her canvass on. I urged the men to exert themselves, and it was not long till the wings of the Albatross were expanded to the breeze. But, notwithstanding all our speed, the little Petrel took the start of us ; and, before we could well gather way, she had headed us considerably.

Being rather to windward of us when she started, she was enabled to keep more away ; and, taking advantage of her position, she set her square fore-sail.

The breeze was moderate at the time, exactly what the buoyant little craft delighted in ; and away she bounded, under every stitch of canvass she could get to draw, apparently determined to leave us no chance of coping with her. We packed upon the Albatross as much as we could, but it was all to no purpose. Our taunting little rival still continued to head us more and more, and at last she came near enough the brig to give her a shot. To this salutation, however, the stately chase paid no more attention than a drowsy negro would pay to the buzz of a musquito.

The breeze had been all along gradually freshening ; and it now blew so strong that the Petrel was under the necessity of taking in her flying kites. The brig was at this time running down, in shore, to windward of Round Island ; and her position, in relation to the Petrel, seemed to afford the latter a good opportunity of cutting her off. This, to all appearance, she could easily do, by running through between Round Island and Pigeon Island, and, from thence, getting between flat Island, Gunners' Quoin, and the mainland of the Mauritius.

Round Island is a small, circular, table of land, about a mile in diameter, rising precipitously out of the water, about three leagues from the Isle of France. So high does it rear its palm-clad summit, that, even when the breeze is strong, the water immediately under its shelter to leeward is left in a most profound calm. The Petrel did not apparently reckon on this circumstance ; and, accordingly, no sooner did she get between Round Island and Pigeon Island, than the breeze left her, and she was instantly reduced to a state of total inertion, her sails hanging, like loose drapery, from the spars.

"We'll get the better of the saucy little beauty now !" said Strangways. "Bear more away, Mr. Lascelles, and keep well to leeward of both islands."

The breeze had now freshened considerably, and as it bore the Albatross rapidly forward on her new course, it was not long till the intervention of Pigeon island hid the Petrel entirely from our view.

How solemnly true are the words—"In the midst of

live we are in death!" Scarcely had we once more opened out our unluckily consort from Pigeon Island, when the wind, which had been gradually freshening, increased to a light gale. The water immediately under the shelter of Round Island, however, continued, as before, calm and unruffled; and the Petrel still lay without a breath of air to bear her on her forward progress.

We saw her, with all her gay, white canvass spread, wooing, in vain, the partial breeze which sighed among the palm-trees of the overhanging shore, and agitated the breaking ocean, within a few hundred yards of the spot where she lay. We saw her, as she gracefully rose and sank on the slightly undulated water, now stooping, and now throwing backward her spars, with an impatient restlessness, that seemed to "chide delay."

It was, altogether, a scene which a marine Wouwerman might have selected for the canvass. A lovely scene; alas, how soon to be overcast!

Suddenly, we observed the unfortunate vessel stagger, as if she had received some severe and unexpected blow. All her loose canvass became in an instant distended; she gave one heavy lurch, rolled over, and disappeared. A squall, which in her then quiescent state was irresistible, had come sweeping round the high land under which she lay; and, catching her extended sails, it threw her suddenly over, before she had time to gather way. Like the passing of a shadow, in one instant she was gone!

We kept our eyes rivetted upon the spot where she disappeared. Slowly her dripping canvass began again to emerge from the water, and slowly did her masts resume their upright position. But it was only to be again engulfed. When she righted, her hull was completely under water; and her masts and rigging, after vibrating to and fro for a moment, began to quiver, as it were, convulsively in the air, and then gradually to sink. In this manner, and still maintaining her upright position, the unfortunate vessel went slowly down. We saw, but could not succour!

The crew had, probably, been either drawn under water, by the suction of the sinking vessel, or had struck off from her, immediately on her first immersion. One solitary individual only continued still to cling to the wreck,

perched among the rigging, and clambering up the shrouds, as the water gradually mounted on the masts.

“It is Neville!” cried Strangways, who was examining the scene through his glass. “In the true spirit of a commander, he clings to his vessel as long as a spar of her remains above!”

And so it was. We saw the gallant fellow mount higher and higher on the rigging the deeper his unlucky vessel sank; and it was only when the colours were disappearing beneath the surface, that he placed his foot upon the truck, and threw himself headlong into the water.

The moment that we first observed the accident we had shortened sail to the squall, and orders were issued to get out the boat. But, rapidly as this was done, the fate of the Petrel was more rapid still; and, when the boat touched the water, not a vestige of the unfortunate vessel remained.

I took my place in the stern-sheets, and ordered the men to pull their utmost; for, as we had about a mile to go, and that to windward, I feared that death might have done his work with many of the crew before we could arrive. As we neared the fatal spot, my anticipation seemed confirmed. Not a trace could we discover of our unhappy comrades.

After rowing about for some time, in a fruitless search, I accidentally observed several tropic birds, or *paille-en-queue*,* as they are generally termed, hovering over the water, about two hundred yards off; and, as I deemed it probable that they had marked some prey at the spot, I ordered the men to pull for them.

My conjecture proved correct. Buoyed upon a sweep, we soon discovered two men floating on the water. We strained every nerve to reach them with as little delay as possible; and we were already within a few yards of the spot where they lay, when, to our horror, we saw, bearing directly down upon them, and much nearer than ourselves, the dark back-fin of an enormous shark!

“Pull, men,” I cried; “give way, for the love of God! Pull!”

The men bent to their oars; but, rapidly as the boat sped through the water, the huge monster sped more

* The *boatswain* of sailors.

rapidly still. With fatal speed he approached the unfortunate men; and already his large back-fin, as always happens before he finally closes on his prey, began to swerve from side to side, like the waving of the dismal banner of death.

With long and rapid strokes the rowers struck the water, and the spray was dashed from the bows of our boat as we bounded eagerly onwards. But in vain! Suddenly, and before we could interpose in his behalf, we observed one of the unhappy men give a convulsive start. His doom was sealed! Wildly he flung up his arms in the air, uttered a piercing shriek, and in an instant disappeared beneath the water.

His comrade heard the wild cry of his fated shipmate, and he saw the red stream of the victim's blood, as it boiled up and mixed with the sea-water at his side. He tarried not to see or to hear more, but, striking out violently from the sweep, he swam off with the speed of desperation. We followed on the instant, for the purpose of picking him up; and we had already approached within a few yards of him, when he was startled by the sound of our oars. Hastily he turned round his head, while horror and despair were depicted on his countenance, and, uttering a wild scream of agony, he plunged beneath the water.

Scarcely, however, had a second elapsed when he rose again to the surface, and we lifted him into the boat in a state of total insensibility.

When consciousness began to return, he gradually opened his eyes, started convulsively, and calling out "*The shark! the shark!*" he was about to throw himself overboard, when I fortunately caught his arm. Several days elapsed before the poor fellow perfectly recovered the use of his reason.

We now proceeded in search of the rest of the crew, and we were fortunate enough to pick up Neville and one other man. Of the remaining four not a trace was to be found; and, as they were all of them expert swimmers, it is probable that they fell a prey to the sharks which abound in those seas.

The brig of which we were in chase kept meanwhile steadily on her course; and as a considerable time elapsed before we were again ready to make sail on her, she had

got a long way a-head; nor did we come up with her till she had put into Port Louis.

It turned out, after all, that she was *not* a slaver, but a French merchantman; and this being the case, she was certainly extremely culpable in not lending her aid to the crew of the Petrel. Had she hove about when the accident happened, it is probable, from her position at the time, that every man would have been saved. Her captain was strictly examined upon the subject, and he declared upon his oath, that, from the commencement, he had never seen either the Petrel or the Albatross!

For the credit of human nature, let us suppose that he spoke the truth.

CHAPTER III.

THE CAPTURE OF THE CAMILLA.

It was five of April morn, by the chime:
As we drifted on our path,
There was silence, deep as death,
And the boldest held his breath;
For a time.

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC.

THE repairs of the Hesperus being now nearly completed, Captain Morley began to concert his future movements.

During our stay at Port Louis, we obtained information of a large schooner, which had, for several years, set the laws at defiance, and carried on a most extensive trade in negroes, from the coast of Mozambique.

This vessel was said to be entirely manned by Frenchmen; and her captain was represented as a most desperate character. It was said of him, that, in imitation of one of the celebrated American buccaneers, he had made a vow to his patron saint, sooner to blow his craft out of the water—crew, cargo, and all—than allow her to be captured.

To this desperate alternative, however, he had not as yet been compelled to resort. Repeatedly had the government cruisers been sent in pursuit of him; but none had

ever yet been able to bring his redoubted vessel within range. His consummate seamanship, his intimate knowledge of the seas in which he carried on his traffic, and the never-slumbering vigilance of his well-disciplined crew, prevented his being taken by surprise; while the matchless powers of sailing, which his vessel was said to possess, enabled him to walk away, with ease, from the swiftest of his pursuers.

The description of this redoubted schooner, which was known by the appropriate name of the *Camilla*, was sufficient to fire the ambition of the haughty *Hesperus*.

"We *must* capture her, Strangways," said Morley, one day, to his second lieutenant; "cost what it will, I'm determined she shall be ours, before we leave the station."

"You will find it difficult to get near her, sir," replied Strangways. "I know the *Camilla* of old; and many a run we had after her, when I was last in those seas. Leroux, her captain, is an excellent seaman; and I can vouch for his vessel being an incomparable sailer."

"Though she should sail like the wind," replied Morley, "I'm determined to overhaul her. The *Hesperus*, when put to it, is herself no indifferent sailer."

"May I ask, how you purpose to effect her capture, sir?" said Strangways.

"I am informed," replied the captain, "that, some time during this month, she will be at Zanzibar, where she intends taking in a part of her cargo. She may be there now, or she may not be there for some weeks; but, there she is sure to be, within the time I have mentioned. Now, what I propose is, that you shall, forthwith, take the new brig,* and cruise off Zanzibar; keeping at a cautious distance from the land; so that you may observe her, if she enter the port, and intercept her, if she attempt to leave it. In the meantime, I shall run down the coast of Madagascar with the *Hesperus*; and, after looking into some of the adjacent islands, to ascertain that she is not lurking there, I shall join you in a preconcerted latitude and longitude, off the coast of Zanzibar. In this way, I think, that one or other of us may depend upon falling in with her; and, if we do not, we may then conclude, that she is already in the Zanzibar harbour."

* Our late prize.

The necessary preliminary arrangements having been made, Captain Morley and his lieutenant started on their separate routes; the former on board the *Hesperus*, and Strangways in command of our late prize, the slaver brig; which, being now trimmed and fitted up as a man-of-war, under the name of the *Bonito*, made no despicable appearance in the water. I continued on board the *Hesperus*; and a stupid enough trip we had of it. We peered into every corner that we considered suspicious, but not a trace could we find of the *Camilla*; and, it was with no small pleasure, that, after about a week's sailing, we found ourselves, once more, in company with the *Bonito* at the prescribed rendezvous. Strangways' cruise had been as unsuccessful as our own; the *Camilla* was neither to be seen nor heard of.

From the information we had received at the Mauritius, it seemed probable, that, as we had not fallen in with the object of our search, either in the Mozambique, or in any of her accustomed haunts off Madagascar, she had already taken up her station at Zanzibar.

We were at once sensible of the difficulty of approaching her, in this situation. From the well-known vigilance of the French commander, it was certain, that he would keep a bright look-out for cruisers such as ourselves; and, as it was impossible to approach the island, from any side, without being seen from a great distance, he would thus have sufficient time, after we came within sight of him, to land his slaves, and prepare for our reception.

It was true, indeed, that we might take advantage of the darkness, and approach the island by night. But, a glance at the chart convinced us of the impossibility of this alternative. Numerous small islands, sand-banks, and hidden reefs of rock, guarded the entrance of the harbour; and, to work up either the ship or the brig, during the night, through the narrow, intricate passages, indicated on the chart, was utterly impossible.

No feasible alternative, therefore, remained, but that we should approach as near the island as we could, without the risk of being discovered from the harbour; and, having hove to in this position, to send forward the boats to attempt the entrance after night-fall, and, if possible, to take the Frenchman by surprise.

But to the successful accomplishment, even of this plan, great difficulties presented themselves. In those latitudes, ships can be seen from an immense distance at sea; and, at that season of the year, the duration of darkness was not sufficiently lengthened, to admit of the boats traversing so great an extent of ocean, and accomplishing their object during the same night. The experience of Captain Morley, however, suggested an expedient, by means of which, we hoped to surmount this difficulty.

About a couple of leagues to southward of Zanzibar lies the island of Imbat.* The land, of which this island is composed, is, for the most part, low and flat; but, notwithstanding this, it occurred to Captain Morley, that it might serve as a screen to his movements, and that, by getting it between him and Zanzibar, he might, with less chance of being discovered, concert his future measures. It was, therefore, determined, that we should, in the meantime, run down for Imbat; and, having taken up our position on its southern coast, regulate our ulterior movements, as circumstances might direct.

Accordingly, one fine fresh-blowing morning, about ten o'clock, we signalled the Bonito to take up her station on our weather-quarter; and, making all sail, we were both soon beating in for the land, at an excellent rate.

After a fine run, of about five hours, being well in with the mainland, we shortened sail to the courses, with the topsails on the caps, and bore cautiously down on Imbat, getting as close in shore as we could.

For a couple of hours, we coasted along the southern side of the island, carefully keeping it betwixt us and Zanzibar; till, at last, the soundings began to vary so much—being, at one cast, thirty-five fathoms, and the next perhaps not fifteen—that Captain Morley thought it prudent to drop anchor till next day. We accordingly came to, with the small bower, in about thirteen fathoms water, off the north end of Imbat.

“Mr. Neville,” said Captain Morley; “let a boat be

* I am not sure that I am correct in the name of this island. From the carelessness of the manuscript in my log, I have considerable difficulty in deciphering the word; and I cannot find it entered in any map. The orthography I have given it above, however, is, I think, correct.

lowered, and send out some of the men, to see if they can intercept any canoe, from which intelligence of the schooner may be obtained. It is probable, that the natives here may know something of her."

"I observe that Mr. Strangways has just left the brig, in his gig, sir," replied Neville; "and he is pulling for the ship. Shall I wait till he arrive?"

"True!" said Captain Morley; and, in a few minutes, Strangways stepped upon the quarter-deck.

"What's in the wind, Mr. Strangways?" demanded the captain.

"I've seen her, sir!" replied the lieutenant, eagerly.

"What! The Camilla? Then, I suppose, we may say farewell to her for the present; as, if all be true, she's a craft that can see as far as most of her neighbours."

"I'll take my oath, sir, she has not seen *us*!"

"Why, where is she?" said the captain.

"In the Zanzibar harbour, sir," replied Strangways.

"The Zanzibar harbour, sir! Why, you don't mean to say, that you can recognise her in the harbour, at such a distance?"

"I saw her spars, from the brig's mast-head, sir, over the low land of Imbat, as plainly as I now see you; and, if you will go to the main-top of the Hesperus, I think I shall be able to point her out to you."

They ascended the rigging together, accordingly; and Captain Morley, with the aid of his glass, distinctly saw the top-masts of a schooner, in the harbour at Zanzibar, as Strangways had asserted.

"I see *a* schooner there, Mr. Strangways," he said; "but, how will you convince me that she is *the* schooner of which we are in pursuit?"

"Had you seen her before, sir, as I have done," replied Strangways, "it would not have been difficult to convince you. I could swear to the rake of her masts among ten thousand."

The captain seemed to reflect a moment, and then turned round to his lieutenant.

"I have great confidence in your general accuracy, Mr. Strangways," he said; "and, on the present occasion, I am willing to take it for granted that you are right. But, how are we to get at her? The nights are extremely dark; and the entrance to the harbour is intricate."

"Give me the boats, sir," said Strangways, eagerly, "and if she remain above the water, she shall be yours before daylight!"

"Be it so," said Morley, stepping once more on deck. "Mr. Neville," he continued "man the pinnace and yawl immediately. Let the men be well armed, and put a stock of grog and provisions on board. You had better take your own gig with you, Mr. Strangways; and, see you keep the boats well together, as I feel convinced, that fellow won't be easily taken, if he have any warning of your approach."

The boats were speedily prepared, and manned by a strong party of marines, and some picked seamen; amounting, in all, to about twenty-eight men. Strangways took his place in the pinnace; and, with his permission, I accompanied him in the same boat.

We started about half-past eight, p. m.; and, though we had a long way to pull, we reckoned upon making Zanzibar about two o'clock in the morning. We, accordingly, made considerable progress, till about midnight, when we were met by a tremendous current, which set in strongly against us, round the east end of the island, and retarded our course considerably.

There was but little wind at the time, and what little there was came from the shore; hot, sultry, and loaded with perfume. This added not a little to the fatigue of the men; but they were not to be discouraged; and, aided by an occasional "splice of the mainbrace," they continued their task, with exemplary perseverance. On board, all was silence; not a word was spoken, save in a whisper; and the requisite orders were issued in the same under tone.

At four in the morning, the darkness, as is frequently the case before dawn, became exceedingly dense; and we were obliged to steer, as we best could, by compass. It was a time of extreme anxiety; as we could not be certain as to our exact position, and, every moment, we ran the risk of getting fast on some of the rocks, or sand-banks, which surround the mouth of the harbour.

At length we distinctly heard the sound of breakers to sea-ward; and, as the opposing current began to increase in strength, Strangways concluded, that we had got into one of the narrow passages, which are laid down in the

charts as running between the numerous small islands that beset the entrance of the harbour.

This was so far good ; but, it still remained an important question, whether or not the channel into which we had got would conduct us to the harbour, as many of them led in an entirely opposite direction. We had, however, nothing for it but to pull on ; and heavy work we found it, for the narrower the channel got, the stronger grew the current. It was so dark that we could not see the water under our bows, and we were constantly afraid of striking against the land on either side.

For upwards of half an hour, we continued to hang on the stream ; pulling hard and making little way. At length, however, the current began, gradually, but sensibly, to slacken ; and when, finally, it ceased altogether, we concluded that we had got clear of the channel. But, as to where we were, we had not the slightest idea ; and, to proceed on our course, without being aware of the particular point to which it would conduct us, seemed an utterly needless labour.

“ Lie easy on your oars, men,” said Strangways. “ It is no use pulling farther, until daylight. Serve us out a glass of grog there ; and let us drink success !”

The boats were now all lying abreast of each other, as if starting in a regatta ; and advantage was taken of this pause, to instruct the different commanders as to the positions they should take up on boarding ; provided we should be fortunate enough to fall in with the schooner.

We might have continued, in this position, about forty minutes, when, at last, the day began to dawn.

Scarcely had the first streak of grey light penetrated the darkness, when the practised eye of Strangways was on the alert. The outline of a tract of high land, apparently that of Zanzibar, was first discernible, close a-head. The angular, embrasured line, of what seemed a fort, next presented itself ; and lastly, about a quarter of a mile off, on our larboard bow, the masts of a tall vessel opened indistinctly on our view.

“ By heaven it is the *Camilla* !” cried Strangways. “ Those sticks, once seen, are never to be mistaken ! Stretch out, men, and remember our arrangements. Softly ! softly ! is the word !”

As if actuated by one impulse, down darted the boats upon their prey. As we approached the schooner, the

darkness was still so great, that we could not discover whether or not there was any one on deck to receive us.

Not a moment was to be lost. We pulled softly up, at the side of the stately vessel, in the manner preconcerted; the pinnace boarding on the starboard bow, the yawl and gig on the quarters.

I have said that Strangways and myself were in the pinnace. With a brace of pistols at our waists, and our drawn cutlasses in our hands, we mounted the side of the schooner, as cautiously, and noiselessly, as we could.

We were already upon deck; and we were proceeding carefully aft, when a figure suddenly started out from behind a coil of ropes, and, making a run at Strangways, who walked first, sent him staggering back, and nearly laid him prostrate at the feet of his companions.

The light was still extremely uncertain; and, though I looked anxiously around, I could see nothing of this unexpected assailant. The probability was, that he had again concealed himself, to give more effect to another attack; so, I advanced, with my uplifted cutlass, ready to receive him.

I had not, however, proceeded far, when I received a sudden and severe blow, across the shins, which sent me reeling backwards; and, on recovering myself, I observed, not a little to my surprise, that my secret opponent was no other than a huge black ram! He was in the act of stooping his horned head, preparatory to another run, when a well-directed blow of my cutlass speedily gave him a *quietus*; and, half bleating, half groaning, he rolled heavily over on the deck.

We now proceeded aft, without farther interruption.—Not an individual was stirring on the deck; all was hushed, and motionless; a more propitious surprise could not have been wished for.

“We must first proceed to fasten down the hatches,” said Strangways, in a whisper. “Softly, men; softly!”

We continued our progress cautiously aft, for this purpose; when we were, unexpectedly, interrupted by a voice from below.

“Que diable va là!” it cried. “Vous vous amusez, donc, mes brebis! Ha! ha! c’est Gregoire, qui vous arrangera, joliment, les épaules! c’est lui, qui vous cha-
touillera, doucement, les épaules!—Ha!” he continued,

as, thrusting his red night-capped head through the hatch, he discovered Strangways and his companions ready to receive him—"Ha!—qui vive!"

A blow from the somewhat heavy fist of the lieutenant, was the only reply he received; and, away went the unlucky Frenchman, rolling heavily down the ladder, up which, a moment before, he had so valiantly ascended.

Nothing now occurred to interrupt us, and we proceeded to fasten down the hatches; thus effectually securing ourselves from any farther intrusion on the part of the crew.

"Now, for the fire-eating skipper!" said Strangways. "Mr. Lascelles; take a party of marines, and proceed below to secure him."

Backed by four stout marines, I descended to the cabin; to which I was directed, by the glimmer of a small cruse, that was suspended from the beam. Softly, and stealthily, we entered. Not an individual was stirring. On a table, in the centre of the cabin, lay a brace of huge ship-pistols, and a long cut-and-thrust sword; on the floor were scattered carelessly about the different parts of the captain's wearing apparel. Without wasting much time, in making unnecessary observations, we proceeded forthwith to his berth; and there we found him fast asleep.

Ordering the men to cock their pistols, and present them at his head, I proceeded to rouse him. No sooner had I laid my finger on the coverlet of his bed, than he instantly awoke; and, opening his eyes, he discovered the marines, with their fire-arms pointed at him. Upright he instantly started in his berth; and his countenance assumed an expression of defiance and command. Shaking his enormous fist in the faces of his assailants, he roared out in a tremendous voice—

"A la trahison!—gradins seditieux! vous osez donc attemper la vie de votre capitaine!—Hola! aux secours!—sacre!—Ou sont mes braves!"

"I have to inform you, sir," said I, interrupting him, "that we have captured your vessel. These are part of my men; your own are all secured beneath the hatches. You must instantly come on deck, and speak to my superior officer."

The redoubted Henri Leroux, with a single glance of his keen, penetrating eye, seemed, at once, fully to com-

prehend the true nature of his situation. Without another word in reply, he rose leisurely from his bed; and, having donned a part of his habiliments, he followed us on deck.

The sun had, by this time, risen; and everything around was bathed in the soft fresh light of morning.

"We have been earlier afloat than you this morning, Monsieur," said Strangways, addressing the Frenchman.

Without deigning to reply, Leronx cast a glance of his sharp, dark eye, upon the fort, which frowned, in full majesty, immediately over our heads.

Our situation was, certainly, any thing but a pleasant one. The governor of Zanzibar was well known to be one of the principal patrons of the slave-trade; and, if he had any suspicion of what we were about, he might have blown us out of the water in the lifting of a match. We lay immediately within point blank range of his guns; about forty of which showed their yawning muzzles through the embrasures. Our only hope was, that, at that early hour of the morning, we might be able to get out of reach, without attracting observation.

In this, however, we were deceived. Presently we saw a large galley, or row-boat, put off from the shore, and make directly for the schooner. As she approached, we reckoned that she contained about twenty-four men, all well armed; but as Strangways had ordered his crew to line the gangways, we, too, presented a very formidable appearance, and the boat ventured no nearer than was sufficient for the purposes of a parley.

A man, dressed in the English costume, and who, as we afterwards learned, was the agent employed by the governor to negotiate with English vessels connected with the slave-trade, stood up in the stern-sheets, and saluting us with a wave of a huge three cornered hat, very civilly asked us what was our business there.

"To carry off this vessel," replied Strangways, "which, we understand, is engaged in the contraband trade."

"In that case, sir," replied the envoy, "I have to inform you, that the vessel in question is under the special protection of the governor, and orders are already issued to the fort to blow you out of the water the instant a sail is dropped."

"Inform the governor, sir," replied Strangways, "that

my orders are to take this schooner out of the harbour ; and with God's help, I shall do so. As to his blowing us out of the water, I have only to say, let him blow away and be d——d ; though, perhaps, he is aware, that, if he blow us *out* of the water, the fleet at present off Pemba, will very speedily blow both him and his fort *into* it !”

The envoy, probably taken a little aback by this threat, attempted no reply ; but putting his boat about, instantly made for the shore.

Every moment, we were under apprehension of a volley from the grinning guns that bristled the fort ; and even if we were not sunk upon the spot, how we were to get out of the harbour, hemmed in as it was by so many hidden dangers, seemed a matter of no small difficulty,

“ Mr. Leroux,” said Strangways, going up to the French captain, who stood, with his arms folded across his breast carelessly leaning against the companion ; “ Mr. Leroux, you must be our pilot out of this d——d place !”

“ Impossible, sir !” replied Leroux in English, and with a remarkably good accent, without changing his position, or moving a single muscle of his countenance. “ Impossible, sir ! my mate has always acted as my pilot, he is now on shore, and I do not know an inch of the passage.”

“ I have no time to argue the point with you, sir,” replied Strangways, “ as the garrison above are probably, at this moment, preparing their guns. Mr. Lascelles,” he continued, addressing himself to me, conduct Mr. Leroux aft, and, from his directions, con the ship. Should she touch the bottom, were it only to grate against a grain of sand, instantly blow his brains out ! You understand, sir ?”

“ Ay, ay, sir !” I replied, handling the butts of my huge ship pistols with one hand, and, with the other, conducting the unlucky Frenchman aft.

I have seldom met with a man who seemed, at a single glance, to comprehend the true nature of his situation more thoroughly than this Leroux. After Strangways' order to me, he never uttered a word of objection, but gave his directions in the most calm and decided manner. I conned the vessel accordingly, and we cleared the dangers without the slightest accident.

The muzzles of the great guns in the fort continued,

meantime, pointing right down upon us, and, every moment, we expected to have a shower of grape poured into our "devoted bark." Not a shot however was fired ; and we soon got safely into open water, where, to our inexpressible pleasure, we descried the *Hesperus* and the brig working up to meet us.

"Where did you get your pilot?" said Morley, as soon as he had boarded us.

"I found one ready made, sir," replied Strangways, presenting the redoubted Leroux ; "and I have no doubt he can pilot you *in*, with the same precision that he brought us *out*, provided you use the same means of persuasion!"

"I understand," replied Morley, "and I shall certainly avail myself of his services."

We now proceeded to examine our prize. She was manned with thirty as fine looking seamen as ever handled a rope. It only required a single glance at their broad chests, and hardy weather beaten complexions, to see that we should have met with a warm reception had they had any notice of our approach. In the hold we found one hundred and forty slaves ; but, as this was only half the vessel's cargo, we concluded that there must be money concealed somewhere for the purchase of the rest.

Nor were we wrong in our conjecture. The prisoners were closely searched, and we discovered about their persons, in hats, stockings, belts, and so forth, specie to the amount of between nine and ten thousand Spanish dollars.

Captain Morley now intimated his intention of proceeding into the harbour ; and poor Leroux was again ordered to perform the part of pilot ; an office which he now found it in vain to decline.

The schooner went first, the brig and the *Hesperus* following in her wake. We anchored close off the fort, with springs on our cables, ready for action ; but the governor apparently did not like the warlike appearance of our little squadron ; for, instead of a round from the battery, the large row-boat again put off, and the same English envoy apologised to us "for his excellency having mistaken our boats, in the grey of the morning, for those of some pirates who were lurking in the neighbourhood!" He concluded by giving us a most cordial invitation on shore.

When we examined the fort afterwards, in company with the governor, we found that, of the forty guns that grinned through the embrasures, only *one* was fit for service ; a circumstance which accounted for the great forbearance of “his excellency,” in not fulfilling his threat, and firing upon us while we were in the act of carrying off the schooner.

CHAPTER IV.

TURTLE-HUNTING.

A hunting we go, without horse, without hound,
Without rangers, or beaters, or gay bugle sound ;
No gun in our hands, on our shoulders no spear,
Our own brawny arms our hunting gear.

THERE being nothing very attractive, either in the governor or in his somewhat indifferent cheer, we did not tarry long at Zanzibar.

On the morning which succeeded that on which the events described in the last chapter occurred, we started, once more for the Mauritius. The only serviceable gun, in the formidable-looking and well-mounted fort, saluted us as we weighed ; and, without accident or obstruction, we threaded our way through the intricate entrance of the harbour, and got under sail, with a fine rattling breeze.

In fair weather, and with an open sea, nothing can possibly be more monotonous and uninteresting than the life of a sailor, during a long voyage. With a steady breeze, a few points abaft the beam, every sail in a situation for drawing set and filled, not even the distant prospect of a gale or change of wind, for leagues and leagues no soundings in the deep blue water, and not a shoal or hidden rock to avoid, away flies the good ship, under the mysterious influence of the steersman’s hand, rapidly towards her destination.

On board, at such a time, save the formal routine of the watch, there is scarcely any duty to perform ; not a sail to shift, not a lead to heave, not even the shadow of a

danger to anticipate or to provide for. It is then that the seamen group upon the forecastle, and entertain each other with tales of "service seen;" while the officers consume the time as they best can, each in the pursuits most congenial to his fancy.

Our voyage on the present occasion, however, was not of such an uninteresting character. From the equator, to the twelfth degree of south latitude, the navigation of the Indian Ocean is peculiarly perilous. Every where, the surface of the water is studded with clusters of small islands, and traversed, at various depths, by extensive coral reefs. The land of which those little islands are composed, is, for the most part, extremely low, and cannot be seen at any great distance; while the ramifications of the coral reefs, with which they are invariably surrounded, sometimes extend for several miles, rising within a few feet of the surface of the water.

It requires, therefore, the greatest caution to avoid running foul of these hidden dangers; and nothing but constant vigilance, correct reckoning, and the most minute charts, can ensure safety, even during the finest weather.

As to weather, we were extremely fortunate. The breeze was steady, and the sky was clear; a blazing sun by day, and a lustrous tropic moon, to guide us on our nocturnal progress. A dark night, or a misty morning, and there might, probably, have been a termination to the exploits of the Hesperus.

We had reached, prosperously, the seventh degree of south latitude, and about the fifty-second of east longitude. It was evening, and I was pacing the quarter-deck with Captain Morley. The worthy commander was good-naturedly instructing me in various matters connected with the business of the ship, when he, unexpectedly, gave the conversation a different turn, and asked me if I was fond of hunting.

"I am a native of the very land of sportsmen, sir," I replied, "and there are few branches of the art in which I have not had some practice."

"Ay, Yorkshire, jolly Yorkshire!" said the captain; "it is, indeed, the very nursery of Nimrods. You are fond of the sport, then, Mr. Lascelles?"

"Enthusiastically fond of it, sir," I replied; "too much so, my father has often told me, for a portionless

cadet. Never have I known such unmingled delight and buoyancy of spirit, as when scouring the country on my little prad, I followed a pack of deep-mouthed fox-hounds ; or, stripped to the shirt, I swam the oozy pools of some alder-edged river, urging on the dogs in pursuit of the wily otter ; or, up to my neck among thick prickly furze, surrounded by a crew of yelping terriers, I unkennelled the fierce badger from his lair. Then, sir, I can train a hawk, and fly her too ; I can use my fowling-piece with tolerable precision, and kill a salmon either with the rod or with the spear."

"Ah ! I see you are an enthusiast," replied Morley ; "and I am glad to have an opportunity of indulging you in your favourite vein. We shall have a hunt tomorrow !"

"A hunt, sir ? here !"

"Ay, even here ; in the middle of the Indian Ocean."

"Really, sir, I cannot imagine where we shall find the game, unless indeed we unkennel a rat in the hold."

"No, no," replied Morley ; "you shall stoop at a nobler quarry. You shall hunt a turtle, sir."

"A turtle !"

"Ay, a turtle ; and yonder is the sporting ground."

He indicated with his finger one of the small islands already alluded to, which we were now rapidly approaching.

"Yonder island," he continued, "is the Isle d'Alphonse ; where, twenty years ago, as youngster on board the ———, I made my debut as a turtle-hunter. I am now somewhat old to relish the sport, and you shall take my place, Mr. Lascelles."

Before sunset, accordingly, we signalled the Bonito and the schooner, and came to, to leeward of the Isle d'Alphonse.

In its general appearance, this island resembled the others of the same description which we had already passed. It was of an oval shape, and in circumference not more, I should think, than about a mile and a half.— Nearly two-thirds of its entire surface consisted of a broad belt of white sand, which extended the whole way round the water's edge, leaving only a small patch of black rocks and parched turf in the centre, where a few dwarf shrubs and stunted trees found a scanty nourishment.

About half-a-mile from the island, and keeping nearly

parallel with its beach, ran a reef of coral, girding it completely round; sometimes apparent, but for the most part hidden beneath the surface of the water. The space between this reef and the shore consisted of a bed of flat sand, which, when the tide had ebbed, was left nearly dry, but at high water it was completely covered by the sea, to the depth of from three and a half to four feet.—To this narrow channel the turtle resorted, to bask in the sun, and here was to be the scene of our sport.

Having received due instructions from Captain Morley, as to how we were to proceed, and being headed by Strangways, who was experienced in this species of chase, a band of about ten of us set off next morning in the jolly boat, and made for the island. The tide was nearly full at the time; and, having run through a small passage in the coral reef, we speedily traversed the space of shallow water betwixt it and the shore, landed, and drew up our boat on the beach.

It was a brilliant day even for that brilliant clime.—Not a rack of vapour marred the deep, translucent, azure of the sky; the sun was intensely hot, and the ocean shone, in the beams of the burning orb, like a sheet of molten silver. Numerous seafowl, of various descriptions, sported about on the surface of the water; and the penguin and the gannet fled, in screaming flocks, as we approached, to hide themselves among the brushwood on the island.

Our operations were commenced immediately opposite the place where we landed. Acting according to Strangways' directions, we each stripped to the shirt and trousers, and, entering the water, formed ourselves into a line across the narrow channel that ran betwixt the coral reef and the island.

At the landward end of this battalion was Strangways, at the other myself; and, when we had all taken our places, we moved forward in a body, much in the same manner as a band of sportsmen do when they beat a furze cover, or traverse a field, in search of a hare for the greyhounds.

Strangways took the lead; the rest of the party, to use a military phrase, dressing by him, as nearly as circumstances would permit; and, for my own part, I found it difficult enough to keep my ground. Being a boy at the

time, and by no means arrived at my full growth, the water, which did not reach above the breasts of my companions, in some places, rose on me as high as my neck; and any awkwardness of movement, or any trip of the foot, was sure to be followed on my part by a total immersion. At length, finding that this mode of proceeding fatigued me, I was fain to throw myself on the water and swim; a position which, though it allowed me to make greater progress, was not so favourable for keeping a lookout for our game.

For the first half hour, fortune seemed to desert us; and we began to be apprehensive of indifferent sport. Not a turtle was to be seen. The surface of the water was smooth and unbroken, and there was nothing to relieve the sameness of the scene. The penguins shrieked and screamed on the shore; the tiny waves broke, monotonously, on the beach; and the timid sea-fowl, that sported in the water, dived as we approached, and emerged, at a greater distance, to dive again.

I was beginning to be somewhat weary of such dull, and, at the same time, fatiguing work; when my ears were at length saluted by the joyful tidings, "*A See Ho!*"

I was swimming at the time; but, stretching up my head as high as I could, I discovered, at no great distance, a small, black, circular spot, on the water. From the instructions I had previously received, I concluded this to be a sleeping turtle basking in the rays of the sun, his shell just breaking the water's surface. Following Captain Morley's directions, I forthwith swam cautiously up to the spot; and there he floated, a huge animal, weighing, to all appearance, at least three hundred-weight.

Having ascertained in which direction his head lay, I crept softly behind him; and, placing my hands on his shell, as if I had been playing leap-frog, I slid myself lightly on his back, and grasped him firmly with both hands round the neck, just where it protruded from the shell.

Suddenly awakened by such an unexpected attack, the huge animal gave himself a shake, which nearly unseated me, and then darted off—my unlucky person on his back—with all the speed he could muster. Sometimes plunging downwards, he pursued his course along the bottom; sometimes again emerging, he splashed his way rapidly through the water near to the surface. At one time I was totally immersed over head, at another almost choked

by the hissing spray, that flew in all directions around me. As Leonora said of her spectre-bridegroom's steed—

Tramp ! tramp ! along the sand he went ;
Splash ! splash ! throughout the sea ;
Hurrah ! hurrah ! my gay gallant,
Wilt ride a course with me !

Onward we went, I clinging pertinaciously to my seat, and my water-born steed pursuing his career with unabated ardour.

Half stupified by the repeated immersions I had undergone, and blinded by the spray, I scarcely knew what I did ; and I was certainly quite unconscious of the direction in which the animal was carrying me. From a sudden, side-jerk, in his motion, indeed, I concluded that he must either have turned quite round, or, at all events, have altered considerably his original course ; but it was not till he had somewhat slackened his pace, and kept nearer to the surface than usual, that I had an opportunity of looking about me.

To my surprise, I descried my companions a long way to windward, and betwixt them and myself was the reef of coral. I had evidently passed the barrier that hemmed in the shallow water, and was hurrying, with a most fatal speed, out to sea.

I was so completely bewildered, that I did not know what to do ; but I still clung instinctively to my seat ; the turtle dashing onwards, now plunging into deep water, now skimming along near the surface.

At length, I fortunately recollected the instructions I had received from Captain Morley. Cautiously stealing my hands up his neck, I reached his horny head, and inserted the forefinger of each hand into his eyes. The instant he was in darkness, he stopped dead short, with such a sudden jerk, that I was almost precipitated forward. Not a struggle did the animal now make to free himself ; in an instant he was reduced to a state of total inertion, and rising to the surface, he floated, still and motionless, as if he had been dead. I continued to keep my fingers in his eyes, hallooing for my companions at the top of my voice.

The moment Strangways observed that I was carried beyond the coral reef, he had ordered the men to get the boat into the water and give chase, so that, by the time I succeeded in stopping the turtle's career, they were coming rapidly down upon me.

After a good deal of jeering on the part of my companions, I was removed from my perilous situation; and the turtle, being turned on his back, was got into the boat, though not without considerable difficulty, as he proved a very heavy one.

We now returned to pursue our sport within the reef. Never have I anywhere seen turtle so plentiful as at the Isle d'Alphonse. When we came to the lee-side of the island, they were floating about in such numbers that we frequently had three or four in chase at the same time. There were, however, no more runs so long as mine had been, as, by a little practice, we managed to darken their eyes almost as soon as we got on their backs; and whenever we succeeded in doing this they invariably stopped dead short, and were easily secured.

At luncheon time we counted over our stock, and found that we had secured seventeen very fine ones; none of them under two hundred-weight, some of them upwards of three.

On board, for a couple of weeks afterwards, we had abundance cooked daily; and it would have done the heart of an alderman good, to see a whole turtle put into the ship's coppers at once, and the soup devoured by the seamen out of buckets. Jack, however, did not enjoy his new-fashioned mess with the zest which his countrymen at home may think he ought to have done. At first, indeed, he made no complaints; but, after a day or two, he began to sigh for his ordinary fare; declaring, that, "though turtle might be all very well for your land-going chaps, it was never fit to hold a candle to pork and pea-soup!"

CHAPTER V.

THE BOATSWAIN'S DUEL.

——— I embrace it freely;
Give us the foils; come on!

HAMLET.

ARRIVED at the Isle of France, the *Hesperus* was, once more, warped into the Trou Fanfaron, previous to our re-

turn to England; and we were allowed a few days to look about the island, and mix a little with its society.

Among the other acquaintances that we made here, were the officers of the *Emerald* frigate; which vessel had arrived at Port Louis, during our absence on the Zanzibar expedition, and was now lying off Fort Tonneliers.

Those gentlemen we found to be, in every respect, exceedingly agreeable companions; and many were the pleasant excursions we made in their company, to explore the interior of the island.

The commander of the *Emerald*, Captain Lumsden, was a fine, straightforward, gentlemanly man; rather advanced in years, and belonging decidedly to the old school of naval officers. His manners might have been termed somewhat rough for modern refinement; and his conversation, though intelligent and entertaining, was, perhaps, too profusely interlarded with common sea phrases, and fore-castle oaths, to suit the quarter-deck of the present-day. He was an excellent seaman; completely versed in all the mysteries of his profession; and, that his courage was of the most dauntless description, he had repeatedly proved, in the numerous actions in which he had been engaged.

On board his ship, he was an extremely strict disciplinarian, and a most uncompromising maintainer of all the etiquette of the service; but, notwithstanding his peculiarities, he was kind, warm-hearted, and indulgent; adored by his crew, honoured and respected by his officers.

One peculiarity, in his discipline, gave rise to the ludicrous circumstance which I am about to relate.

In his opinion, nothing contributed more to the maintenance of good order, on board ship, than the scrupulous preservation of all those minute points of form and etiquette which mark the distinction between the different ranks and orders of which the crew is composed. He himself exacted, rigorously, the observance of every little point of ceremonial, which was due to his rank, as commander; and he insisted that all his officers, from the first lieutenant downwards, should observe the same rule towards each other; being thoroughly convinced, that, in thus maintaining the outward form of respect due to superior rank, he would succeed in systematizing, as it were, obedience, and in rendering subordination habitual,

Nay, so far did he carry his peculiar tenets in this matter, that, in order to keep up a due distinction between the foremast-men and the warrant officers,* he instituted a standing order, that the latter should never appear on leave, or on short duty, without the appendage, to which their rank entitled them, of cocked hats and side-arms.

This was certainly stretching his favourite system a little beyond due bounds. The warrant-officers had themselves, at one time, served before the mast; and their duty was still intimately connected with that of the foremast-men. They all associated together as equals; in manners, in habits, in pursuits, they were the same; and, thus the external distinction which an uniform was intended to make between them, was calculated to excite the ridicule, rather than the respect of the crew. Besides, the warrant-officers themselves could not but feel uncomfortable, when arrayed in a garb, which mocked them, as it were, with a rank which they possessed in name more than in reality.

The boatswain, on board the Emerald, was an Irishman, named Denis O'Grady. Denis had served, for about twenty years, before the mast, and was accustomed to all the license, in dress and manners, which foremast-men conceive themselves privileged to assume. Like his commander, Denis belonged decidedly to the old school. He was a zealous patron of flip and tobacco, maintained the dignity of the profession with becoming warmth, and hated Bonaparte and the French, even more cordially than was, perhaps, necessary. He looked upon his captain as an oracle of human wisdom, and as the concentrated essence of human power; to cavil at, or contradict, any of whose dogmas, would have been the most unpardonable folly and presumption.

Accordingly, when promoted to the rank of boatswain—an honour which had been recently conferred on him—though he found the restraint of the “officer’s traps” not a little inconvenient, he scrupulously obeyed the standing order, and appeared in uniform on every proper occasion. Nay, it was alleged by his shipmates, that he was rather

* It may, perhaps, be proper to inform my *land* readers, that on board a man-of-war, the gunner, boatswain, and carpenter, are termed “*warrant-officers*.” The practice of investing these officers with cocked hats and swords, may be said to be now obsolete, unless, perhaps, on very particular occasions.

fond of arraying himself in "full fig," and that he assumed the airs, along with the dress, of an officer; holding his head an inch or two higher when it was invested with the cocked hat, and looking, perhaps, a little askance at his old comrades.

The truth was, Denis was a remarkably fine-looking fellow; and he had no small pleasure in contemplating his person, when arrayed in full costume. Besides, as the captain told him, he was now *an officer*; and he deemed it proper to assume a dignity of deportment, conformable to his exalted rank.

One evening, having obtained leave, he went on shore, without any more fixed design than that of looking about him, or, as his comrades said, of showing himself off. He was arrayed in full uniform, with his cocked hat and sword; and a smarter, finer-looking fellow, was not to be seen.

After lounging about the principal streets of the town for some time, he determined to treat himself to a little refreshment; and, not deeming it respectable to be seen in a common dram-shop in full uniform, he adjourned, for this purpose, to one of the better class of restaurateurs, usually frequented by officers.

It so happened, that Strangways and myself were seated, at the time, in the very house to which Denis directed his steps; and not a little were we amused when we saw him enter, with as much dignity and importance in his look as might have served an admiral.

The room was such as is usually found in similar places of public entertainment. Numerous small tables, at which the various guests were seated, stood ranged around; and, on the present occasion, all of them were, more or less, occupied.

As Denis entered, he doffed his cocked hat; and, walking up to a table, at which there was only a single guest, he seated himself without ceremony, and called for a bottle of wine.

The other occupant of the table, who was an officer in the French service, with a very formidable pair of moustaches, concluding, from the uniform he wore, that Denis was a person of rank in the English navy, recognised his presence by a slight inclination of the head; and Denis, thinking this mark of attention, as he said himself, "mighty

p'lite," returned the compliment, by drinking his neighbour's health in a bumper. The Frenchman thanked him, filled his glass in his turn, and drank to Denis. Thus, the ice of ceremony being thawed, the passage to conversational intercourse was readily opened.

Strangways and myself, seeing Denis conduct himself with so much propriety, took no further notice of him; until we were attracted, about half-an-hour afterwards, by loud sounds of altercation, proceeding from the table at which he sat.

"By gar, sair," cried the Frenchman in broken English, leaning half across the table, and speaking into Denis's face; "vat you say, sair,—vat you say of le grand Napoleon? Mille tonnerres! vat you say!"

"Is it what I say of Boney, you're axing?" said Denis, with the greatest coolness. "Why, I just say of him now, what I said before, that he was the bloodiest, most cowardly son of a gun, that ever God made; and if he hadn't had the good luck to be a Catholic, he would have been d—d to all eternity, as he desarves—that's all!"

"Sair! you know whom you speak to, sair?" cried the Frenchman, in great warmth. "Napoleon vas mon general—mon prince!—Ju suis Français, sair!—Sacre! I am Frenchman!"

"I don't care the fag-end of a rope for all the Frenchmen in Christendom," cried Denis, whose head was, evidently, a good deal affected by the wine he had drank; "they're all of a piece, blast them! A set of d—d frog-eating, vinegar-drinking, garlic-smelling, hair-powdering, tiptoe-walking, sons of sea-cooks, whom honest John Bull would kick out of the water, any morning of the seven, with a single hitch of his gouty toe!"

"Sacre nom de Dieu!" cried the Frenchman, throwing himself back in his seat, and shaking his clenched fist in the air. "Cochon d'Anglais! tu insultes à la nation Française, sans que je t'arrache, sur le champ, ta misérable vie! Votre carte, monsieur!—je demande votre nom!—Vite! votre carte!" he bellowed out, extending his hand, impatiently, across the table.

"And, what the divil's all this parley-vouing about?" said Denis, not the slightest degree discomposed by the fury of the Frenchman. "Can't ye be afther saying half as much in plain English, and I'll see if I can't give ye an answer."

“Sair!” cried the Frenchman, half-choked with rage; “you have insult me—ma patrie—mon prince—you must give me satisfaction, sair! you must fight me, sacré bleu!”

“Och, and is it fighting you’re afther?” said Denis, rising up, and settling himself, as well as he could, into an attitude of self-defence. “Stand out, my hearty; and you shall have your bellyful of *that*, I promise you!”

The Frenchman, however, did not leave his chair at this summons, apparently not altogether liking the appearance of Denis, when he squared his huge arms before his chest, in the true style of the English ring. As for Denis, he naturally attributed this want of alacrity, on the part of the Frenchman, to cowardice.

“Divil mend ye!” he cried; “is it afraid you are, afther all your brag? Turn out,” he continued, manœuvring his fists in the most approved fashion of Crib or Spring, and advancing slowly on his adversary; “turn out, I say; till I see, if I can’t give you a skinful of broken bones to carry home to your hammock!”

The Frenchman sat, surveying the massive form of the boatswain, with a mingled expression of astonishment and rage; twirling, with his fingers, the black moustache that curled on his quivering lip, evidently quite at a loss what to say or what to do.

As for Denis, he became more and more vociferous, advancing, with squared fists, slowly on his antagonist, and endeavouring to rouse him to action by pouring forth a string of the most abusive epithets. At last he came so near, that the Frenchman, brought, as it were, to bay, found it necessary to say something.

“Je ne suis pas boxeur, monsieur!” he cried, in a voice half-choked with rage and vexation; “je ne suis pas boxeur—je demande votre carte, monsieur!—Your card, sair!”

“And is it a card, wid my name written on it you’re axing for?” cried Denis. “Troth, thin, let me tell ye, that it could never be said of Denis O’Grady, that he was able to write an inch of his name in his life; but my father used to say to me, Dinny, jewel, said he, there’s no use larning to write, at all at all, said he, for, if you lave your mark, it sarves all the same ind, said he; and it’s my mark that I’ll be after laving on your starboard daylight, my hearty, if you don’t turn out and show yourself a man.”

This latter threat honest Denis would probably have put in execution, had not some gentlemen who were seated at a neighbouring table interfered, and informed him that such a thing as fighting with fists was totally unknown among them.

"Thin, how the divil *do* you fight?" said Denis, dropping his hands, and turning round to the speaker.

"You are an officer in the English service, sir," said the gentleman; "and I need scarcely tell you that we fight with swords and fire-arms."

"Is it an officer you say I am?" said Denis; glancing at his sword and huge cocked-hat. "Ay sure, and you're right too; it's a warrant-officer I am, on board the Emerald; and that's the rale truth of it. But the divil a bit of fire-arms I have here, as you may see; so how I am to fight in your fashion I can't understand, unless you'll wait till I go aboard and borrow them."

"We can meet in the morning, sir," said the gentleman, who seemed to take upon himself the office of second to the Frenchman. "We can meet in the morning, sir, and settle the affair beyond the town."

"With all the pleasure in life!" said Denis.

"On the Champ de Mars then, at daylight in the morning," said the gentleman, "we shall expect you."

"Agreed!" said Denis; "I like the thoughts of an action of this sort; and, as for ammunition, why, sure, the gunner will give me a supply."

The affair being thus far settled, the French officer retired with his friend, and Denis, having first finished his bottle of wine, soon afterwards left the house.

Having some curiosity to see how the boatswain would conduct himself in this whimsical affair, Strangways and I agreed to be upon the spot at the time appointed.

The place where the combatants were to meet was a large plain, extending for nearly a mile in length, and covered at one end with a thick clump of shrubs and brushwood. The darkness of night was just giving place to the first peep of dawn, when we stepped upon the beach. Not an individual was stirring, and there was no appearance, either of Denis or his antagonist.

We sauntered about, enjoying the fresh breeze of morning, till the advancing light began to tinge the different objects around us; when we observed a boat, making

rapidly for the shore. No sooner did it touch the beach, than a man and a boy jumped out, and proceeded quickly towards the clump of brushwood at the end of the plain.

A single glance satisfied us that these were no other than the boatswain and his boy; so, taking a near cut through the low-land on our right, we came up with them just as they arrived at the edge of the clump.

“A good day to you, Mr. O’Grady,” said Strangways, “You’re early ashore this morning—anything in the wind, eh?”

Denis stopped short when he heard himself thus addressed; and the appearance which he presented was so unique, that I shall endeavour to describe it.

He was dressed in a sailor’s jacket, with a broad belt round his waist, in which were stuck a pair of huge ship’s pistols. At his side hung a cutlass; under his arm he carried a large ship’s musket, and, in his right hand, a boarding pike. A few paces behind him walked his boy, carrying, in the one hand, an old tarpaulin hat, nearly full of ball-cartridges, and, in the other, a tomahawk.

“In heaven’s name, O’Grady,” cried Strangways, when he had surveyed these strange accoutrements, “what are you after? One would think you were going to sack the town!”

“As the inimy arn’t heavin’ in sight as yet,” said Denis, squirting out his quid, and brushing his beard with the cuff of his coat, “I don’t mind if I tell you all about it, Mr. Strangways. It was last night, sir, no farther gone, that, being ashore on a cruise, I stepped into a tavern to take a splice o’ the main brace; and their I came to moorings, snugly enough, alongside a big whiskered sort of chap, that was sitting at a table drinking wine. Well, sir, the man was mighty p’lite in his way, and so we soon got into graplings together, and began to talk about the war, and the navy, and what not. [*Keep a bright look-out, a-head, boy, will ye; and don’t stand staring at me, like a Jew or a bum-bailiff, on pay-day!*] And all went off mighty well, sir, till I chanced to call old Boney a scoundrel—and so I’ll call him again, the hook-nosed lubber, to the face of the best Frenchman among them. Well, sir, no sooner is the word out of my mouth, than the chap ups, and swears, and axes me what I said—so I tould him my mind very plain, once more, and thin

he swore I must fight him. ‘Och ! if it’s fightin’ you’re afther, my hearty, says I, gittin’ up, here’s at you, says I ;’ but lave him alone, sir, the divil a bit of him ’d come to the scratch, at all at all. [*Ram a cartridge into the musket, boy, and make yourself useful ; why you stare at me, as if you had never seen a gintleman atween the eyes of ye afore!*] With that, sir, up comes three or four other chaps, and tells me that Frenchmen never fought wid their fists—divil mend them, sir, because they can’t—and they appointed me to meet them here this mornin’, to fight in their own fashion, with swords and fire-arms ; and so as I like the play, sir, well enough, here I am, and, by St. Patrick, I’ll give them a blaze for it !”

“Very right, Denis,” said Strangways, “but what do you mean to do with so many weapons?”

“Troth, now, sir,” said Denis, “I thought your honour was better up to all the outs and ins of an action than to ax sich a question. It isn’t at every fight, sir, since the French war, I’ve been, without larnin’ something of the trade, let me tell ye. With this musket here, you see, sir, I intind to open the action ; the gunner says it has a capital long range of its own. [*Keep a sharp look-out, ye little spalpeen, will ye, and see if they’re heavin’ in sight yet!*]”

“I suppose, then,” said Strangways, “you’ll use the musket for a long shot?”

“Troth, now, and you’re right there !” said Denis. “Though it isn’t *into* them I’ll fire at a long range but only across their bows, to bring them to, accordin’ to the rule of the sarvice. ‘Thin, ye see, sir, I’ve a pike and a cutlass here, for boarding ; and pistols, for yard-arm and yard-arm, sir ! The cowardly, big-whiskered rascal, talked of bringing a *second* ; he may bring a *third* and a *fourth*, too, and be d——d to him ; it’s Denis O’Grady is a match for them all ! So,” he continued, handling his musket, “I must now go and see the decks cleared for action !”

He and the boy stepped in, accordingly, behind the brushwood, and my companion and myself took up our ground so as to overlook their operations ; perfectly certain that Denis would conduct the action according to the rule, and not fire *into them*, as he called it, until they showed fight. He ensconsed himself in an excellent position,

behind some bushes of myrtle and Indian fig, and sent the boy to look out a-head.

Presently, the little fellow came running up to him, and announced that two strangers were approaching from the town; but that they were still a long way off, at the other end of the plain.

“All’s right!” said Denis, putting the musket to his shoulder; “I see them! Now, stand clear, boy; and, hand along fresh cartridges, cleverly! I’ll give them a blaze in quick sticks—nothing like a long range; stand clear!”

Crack went the musket, and down went another cartridge; away Denis blazed it again, and again it was loaded, with an expedition that might have done credit to a member of the rifle-corps.

Denis knelt behind a thick bush of myrtle, and the boy kept close behind him, in the same attitude; handing out the cartridges from the old hat, which lay on the ground before him. Away blazed Denis, shot after shot, as fast as he could handle his musket; till, at last, the enemy, as he called them, hearing repeated reports, and an occasional whizzing through the air over their heads, stopped short, and looked about them, as if to ascertain the cause of the turmoil.

“That’s your time o’ day!” cried Denis, as soon as he saw that he had *brought them to*. “That’s your time o’ day! Quick! boy, another cartridge! The rascals are going to strike, by St. Patrick!”

Crack went the musket once more, and the ball struck the turf within about ten yards of the spot where the Frenchmen stood; sending the sand and dust flying up into the air.

“Another cartridge, you little spalpeen!” cried Denis, perceiving that his antagonists were now moving rapidly towards his place of ambuscade, to which they were directed by the smoke. “Another cartridge! Quick!—they’re coming to, at last; though I can’t think why they don’t open their fire; unless, indeed, they are saving it up for a broadside at close quarters. D—n them, for unmannerly rascals, however, say I; they might, at least, have had the discretion to answer my salute! But never mind, I’ll give them another blaze over their bows;” and crack

again went the musket, sending the ball whizzing over the Frenchmen's heads.

They were now within about sixty yards of the spot where Denis lay, and began to wave a white handkerchief in the air, and to call out something which we could not distinctly hear. Denis had just completed another charge, when the boy told him they were calling out parley.

"Parley! the cowardly rascals!" replied Denis; "no, no; it wasn't for [parley I came here; I came here to fight! Stand clear! I'll give them a blaze through their rigging, the spalpeens, and see if they won't show their colours;" and crack once more went the musket, whizz once more went the ball.

The Frenchmen, finding that their application for an armistice was totally disregarded, stood still for a moment, apparently uncertain what course to pursue; but when the last shot whizzed past their ears, they began to be alarmed for their personal safety, and turning sharp round, they both ran off, with all the speed they could.

"Ay! I thought as much!" cried Denis, sending another shot after them. "Quick, boy! Handle your tomahawk! We'll give them chase!" and, jumping out from their ambuscade, they both hurried along the plain in pursuit; Denis brandishing his boarding-pike in his hand. The Frenchmen, however, had the greater speed, and gained rapidly a-head.

"They sail well, the rascals!" cried Denis, stopping, completely out of breath, after he had run about a hundred yards. "But never mind! Take a pistol, boy! we'll give the rascals a broadside!"

The boy, accordingly, took one of the pistols, Denis holding the other in his left hand, with the musket in his right, and crack went the whole three at once. Just as they fired, the Frenchmen disappeared into one of the alleys that conducted to the town, and were seen no more.

"Now, boy," said Denis, striking the butt of his musket on the ground, and looking very grave and philosophical; "that's what I call a cleverly won fight; and it will be a lesson to you, my lad, how to conduct yourself in similar circumstances! Now, put up your gear; let us give three cheers for victory, and then for the boat?"

Before Strangways or I could address them, they had gathered up what remained of their ammunition, and were

hurrying down the beach, waving their hats, and hurraing at the top of their lungs.

In the forenoon, the French officer and his second went on board the Emerald, and made a formal complaint to the captain, of the ungentlemanly treatment they had met with from one of his officers. It was, however, explained to them who their antagonist was, and that no officer could, with propriety, meet a person of his station in the field.

The whole affair, the captain said, could only be looked upon as a good joke ; and, to do them justice, the Frenchmen themselves joined heartily in the laugh which it created. After being treated to a good luncheon, they left the ship, apparently quite satisfied ; and singing, as they pulled ashore, the famous French couplets—

Quoique leurs chapeaux sont bien laids,
God-dam ! moi j'aime les Anglais ;
 Ils ont un si bon caractère !
 Comme ils sont polis ! et surtout
 Que leurs plaisirs sont de bon gout !
 Non, chez nous, point,
 Point de ces coups de poign,
 Qui font tant d'honneur à l'Angleterre !

As for Denis O'Grady, he escaped with a severe reprimand from the captain ; in the first place, for so far forgetting himself as to speak uncivilly to an officer and a gentleman ; and, in the second place, for having wasted so great a quantity of the king's stores in such an unnecessary manner.

CHAPTER VI.

FLAT ISLAND.

There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
 Looks fearfully on the confined deep.

————— How fearful
 And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes below !

KING LEAR.

IN order to avoid the observation of the government cruisers, it was customary for slave-ships to land their cargoes at some of the adjacent islands, or remote parts

of the Mauritius, from whence they were afterwards forwarded to the interior, in small detachments for sale.

Captain Morley determined, if possible, to frustrate this practice ; and, accordingly, during the time that the *Hesperus* was undergoing the necessary repairs in the *Trou Fanfaron*, he distributed, among the various signal posts, harbours and small islands, which abound on the coast and in the neighbourhood, as many of the officers and men as could be spared from the routine duty on board, with strict orders to keep a vigilant watch on all who were suspected of conniving at the illicit traffic.

A few miles eastward of the Mauritius, lies a small spot of land called Flat Island. This place, at the time of which I speak, was used as a cotton-plantation, and it belonged in property to a French cotton-planter, named Monsieur Jean Boismason. Being totally uninhabited, and only resorted to by the proprietor at stated seasons, for the purpose of gathering the crop, Flat Island had long been considered a favourable station for slave ships to land their cargoes, as they could easily bring them from thence to the mainland for market, as opportunity offered.

Here, therefore, Captain Morley determined to station one of the preventive parties, to the command of which I was appointed, being invested, at the same time, with the dignity of temporary governor of the place.

“ You will occupy the Governor’s palace, during your stay, Mr. Lascelles,” said Morley ; but as you may not find provisions very plenty, I advise you to furnish yourself with a sufficient stock before you go.”

Accordingly when the necessary preparations had been made, I sailed from Port Louis with a party of three marines, in a large six-oared galley, manned and armed. On board was stowed a six weeks’ stock of provisions ; together with some ship’s muskets, and a few sets of fishing tackle, to aid us in passing what threatened to be a somewhat monotonous sojourn.

Wind and tide being favourable, we soon left the Mauritius a-stern, and ere long, Flat Island hove in sight.

The land of which this island is composed extends to about a mile in length, lying extremely low, and running nearly parallel with the water, save at the north-west extremity, where it is terminated by an abrupt precipitous promontory of considerable height. Numerous sea-fowl

circled round the summit of this rock, and screamed loudly as our galley passed beneath. Holding our course close in shore for about a quarter of a mile, we doubled a small projecting black rock, which had been described to us as forming a sort of break-water to the harbour, and we at last, came to in a little placid sand-fringed bay.

Having succeeded without difficulty, in beaching the galley, Wolfe, who was our coxswain, and myself, proceeded in search of what Captain Morley was pleased to call the Governor's Palace; and for this purpose, we ascended the black rock I have just mentioned.

I confess that, in a place such as this, I did not expect to find the usual appendages of a vice-royal residence—stately towers, elegant façades, and battlemented outworks, but still, as the captain had talked of a Palace, I hoped to find a building of sufficient dimensions to accommodate my party comfortably.

Having gained the summit of the rock, therefore, I gazed round, in every direction, in search of such a place, but not the vestige of any human dwelling was discernible. The prospect, indeed, was barren enough. The flat part of the island, consisting of rock and sand, covered in patches with stunted, sickly-looking cotton shrubs, lay beneath; while, towering up on our right, appeared the promontory which forms its farther extremity, bare and weather-beaten. without any signs of vegetation, save some long rank grass which fringed its base. Of a human habitation not a trace was to be seen.

"Where can the *palace* be, sir?" said Wolfe, touching his hat, while a leer, peculiarly his own, lurked round the corners of his lips, and under the shadow of his huge bushy whiskers.

"Why, that's just what I wish to find out," I replied. "You have a good eye for a distance; can you see nothing like a house?"

"In the *distance*, sir," said Wolfe, "I can see nothing, save bare rocks and sea-blasted cotton shrubs. The *palace*, however, I'm thinking, is nearer at hand. Don't you see it, sir, at the foot of yonder cluster of low black rocks, on the other side of the bay?"

"I see a little hut there," said I, "which I take to be a boat-house, But that surely cannot be the place to which Captain Morley alluded."

“The same, and no other, I believe sir,” replied Wolfe. “Why, from this spot, we can take in every inch of the island; and if you can see anything else in the shape of a house, it is more than I can!”

There was no denying the truth of this latter allegation. From our present elevated position we could see every corner of the island, and the hut in question was the only habitable place it contained.

We were, therefore, fain to descend and examine this lowly-looking abode a little more closely. We found it to be a small saddle-roofed hut, having, in the front-wall, a door-way and a small opening for a window; but the door-way contained no door, and the sashless window, although it admitted the light, was by no means calculated to exclude the weather. The area inside appeared to be about twenty feet by fifteen; the floor was bare sand, and the walls native unadorned mud. Fortunately, however, the edifice was furnished with a roof, which, though it contained sundry orifices capable of admitting the rain, we hoped would at least be sufficient to protect us against the rays of the sun. And this was the palace destined for the residence of the Governor of Flat Island!

All the preparations we had it in our power to make, in order to render the place habitable, were speedily completed. A spare hammock was suspended in the door-way, and the boat's sail was hung up across the area within, so as to divide it into two separate compartments. In one of these, which was destined for my own peculiar occupation, or state chamber as it were, I had my cot slung, and the provisions stowed; the other was tenanted by the boat's crew. The Albatross, which visited us the day after our arrival, supplied me with a table and a few chairs; and with these accommodations I was fain to make myself as comfortable as possible.

And really, when a man is determined to enjoy himself, it is astonishing from what slender resources enjoyment may be derived. The day was spent merrily in fishing, shooting, and cruising round the island; and the evenings passed pleasantly enough, with the aid of a pipe of good tobacco and a book.

Fish of various kinds were easily caught in great numbers, with a rod and line, from the rocky points on the coast. On the island the hares were literally swarming,

and they afforded not only excellent sport, but an abundant supply of fresh provisions.

Indeed, the table of the "palace" was so well furnished, that I never failed to have a weekly visit from some of my brother officers, as they passed and repassed to their different stations. Excepting myself, whose appointment in the meantime was permanent, the commanders of the different parties, posted at the other small islands in the neighbourhood, were ordered to rendezvous every Monday at Port Louis, for the purpose of receiving instructions and taking in provisions; and they usually contrived to visit me on their way, arriving on Saturday night, and remaining till the Monday morning.

On these occasions our evenings were merry in the extreme; and the presence of my friends was exhilarating beyond measure to me, who had daily sat down to my governor's fare in solitary magnificence.

I had already spent about three weeks upon Flat Island, and I had explored every corner of my dominions several times over, with the proud consciousness of being 'monarch of all I surveyed!' In the whole circuit, there was not a rock or shrub with which I was not familiar; not a hare's form or gannet's nest, to which I could not almost have approached blindfold.

Within about half a mile up the coast from our little harbour, however, a tall insulated rock, called the Sugar Loaf, shot up in solitary stateliness, sheer out of the water. On this rock I had never yet set foot; and for the purpose of changing the scene, I determined one day to explore it; hoping, at the same time, to find a sufficient number of eggs among its crannies to reward my labour. Accordingly, having left a few look-outs, properly stationed, with orders to fire a musket should any vessel be seen nearing the island, I manned the galley with a couple of men, and, taking Wolfe as my attendant, I set forward on my expedition.

It was a lovely morning for a pleasure excursion. The breeze was light, the water gently rippled, and a glorious tropic sun rode high in the clear azure of the heavens. "Merrily, merrily went the bark," bounding buoyantly through the harmless waters; and, ere many minutes had elapsed, we found ourselves under the lee of the Sugar Loaf.

It was a threatening, dark-browed rock; its lower part rising perpendicularly out of the water, while its summit hung beetling outwards, and nodded fearfully over our heads.

We lay to for a moment to contemplate it, and to consider how it was possible to ascend to the top. But never was there rock more forbidding to the climber. Steep, unbroken, wall-like masses of stone, girded its base, while its brow hung threateningly over the water; seeming, as it were, to dare us to the ascent. A shelving platform of rock, about ten or twelve feet in width, tangled with seaweed, and washed by the rising and receding waves, seemed to form the foundation of this massive superstructure. Upon this rock, having backed in the boat stern foremost, Wolfe and I leaped without much difficulty; and ordering the men to lie off on their oars till our return, we set forward on our survey.

In the solid unbroken façade of the lofty wall of rock, that rose perpendicularly from the platform on which we stood, there was not a single projecting angle to clasp, nor the smallest crevice into which the foot of the climber might be inserted. Incrusted with limpets, festooned with the tendrils of dark-coloured sea-weed, and dripping with the spray which, ever and anon, was thrown over it by the rising waves, it stood in insurmountable majesty before us.

An ascent at this place, therefore, being impossible, we passed onwards along the slippery edge of the weed-tangled platform, in search of some more accessible spot; nor was it long till we discovered a narrow zig-zag fissure, scarcely wide enough to admit the foot, but presenting, at various distances, as if the rock had been rent asunder by some convulsion of nature, small projecting knotholes, which might easily be grasped by the hand.

"Well, Wolfe," I said, as I ran my eye up this not very apposite-looking ladder; "shall we try it here?"

"Why, sir," replied Wolfe, touching his hat with rather a remonstrative gesture; "the ascent is a dangerous one, sir; and before we are half way up, we shall wish ourselves down again!"

"True," said I, "but then it is the only accessible spot we can find."

“Under your favour, sir,” said Wolfe, “is there any *necessity* for going up at all?”

“Necessity! why, no; not any *necessity*! But I’ve made up my mind to be on the top; and on the top, accordingly, I shall at least *endeavour* to be!”

“As you please, sir!” replied Wolfe; “though, under your favour, I think it scarcely worth while to risk our necks for the value of a few boobies’ eggs!”

“You seem afraid, Wolfe!” said I. “Well! you’re quite welcome to remain below. For my own part, I am *determined* to go; so there’s an end of it!”

“Afraid! sir,” said Wolfe, rather haughtily; “I never was afraid of any thing. Come, sir; there’s no use losing time; let us mount!”

Accordingly, without farther parley, we breasted the rock, and commenced the ascent; I taking the lead, and Wolfe following close behind.

It was an arduous undertaking; and, as I have often thought since, a very fool-hardy one. To trust mainly to the strength of our arms, and swing ourselves upwards, by means of the little projecting angles I have already mentioned, was our only alternative. Only now and then, and at considerable distances, could we find an opportunity of supporting ourselves by our feet; so that, for the most part, we had to trust our weight entirely to our hands, which were not a little lacerated by the sharp edges of the rock we were obliged to clasp. Nor dared we allow ourselves a moment’s breathing time, during our perilous progress; for, so loosely were the little knuckles on which we depended connected with the main rock, that had we ventured to hang upon them for an instant, they would probably have been detached by our weight, and ourselves precipitated to the bottom.

Totally out of breath, with bleeding hands and aching arms, it was not without considerable delight, that, after an ascent of about fifty feet, my eyes came on a level with a small platform of between two and three feet square, indented, as it were, into the face of the rock. Upon this, with a single effort, I threw myself, enjoying the prospect of a few minutes’ rest; but, scarcely was I securely balanced on my precarious prop, when I saw Wolfe, about a foot lower down, hanging with both hands to a small

angular knotch, that seemed shaking in its infirm socket, as if about to separate from the parent rock ! A single reach of his arm would have placed him on the enviable platform on which I stood.

“For God’s sake, Mr. Lascelles !” he cried, looking up with a face of consternation ; “for God’s sake, go on, sir ; or I shall be precipitated to the bottom !”

“I cannot stir an inch farther at present !” I replied. “Quick ! catch at my foot, and sway yourself up. Here is room enough for us both.”

Scarcely had I uttered these words, when the knotch on which my poor comrade hung broke off ; and, falling with a rumbling noise down the face of the rock, plunged into the sea.

Just as it gave way, Wolfe, with an effort of desperation, stretched himself up ; and, in an instant, his brawny hand was clasped round my ankle. It was a perilous attempt for us both. Unsteadied by the weight, I staggered ; and I would certainly have fallen from my place, had I not held firmly on by a projecting mass of rock at my side. Poor Wolfe, in the meantime, saw my danger.

“Say the word, Mr. Lascelles,” he cried ; “say the word, and I let go my hold ! Shall I come, or shall I not ?”

“Come ! and be quick !” was my only reply ; and with one strong effort, Wolfe swung himself up, and stood at my side.

The small ledge of rock, on which we were now poised, was not, as I have said, more than two or three feet square ; indeed, so narrow was the space, that we were obliged to clasp each other round the body to prevent ourselves from falling off. On two sides, this little platform was walled in by the adjacent rock, which rose up perpendicularly behind us, to a sufficient height to admit of our standing in a crouching position ; it then took an outward direction, and, projecting horizontally forwards, hung over our heads—a black and craggy canopy. On its other two sides the platform was open, and the rock dipped sheer down from its edge, till it was lost, full fifty feet below, amid the surf and spray of the ocean. Scarcely dared we hazard a look beneath, to where our diminished galley rode buoyantly on the surging waters, so dizzy and bewildering was the prospect.

We stood for sometime in silence, for there was something too appalling in our situation to admit of speech. The wind whistled and howled among the rents and fissures of the rock; the sea leaped and roared far beneath, as if eager to engulf us; and the scared sea-fowl flew screaming, in eddying circles, round the place where we stood.

To have attempted to descend by the same path we had come up, would have been madness; and as for mounting higher, our progress upwards seemed completely cut off by the mass of rock that hung threateningly over our heads.

"Have you considered what we ought to do, Mr. Lascelles?" said Wolfe, at last. "We cannot remain here much longer; I almost think I feel the rock trembling under us."

"I see nothing we *can* do," I replied. "It appears equally impossible to get either up or down."

"Why, as to getting *down*, sir," said Wolfe, "*that* we might manage by a leap; and if we had deep water to plunge into, I would not mind trying it a rope's end. But I have no notion of jumping on that broad rocky platform at the bottom, and being smashed to a jelly in the fall!"

"Not to be thought of!" I replied. "But what do you advise to be done?"

"One thing, sir, I think is clear. There's no use remaining on this cursed point of rock, to be devoured piecemeal by seagulls and boobies; so, if we can't go *down*, we must just determine to go *up*, and trust to Providence for finding some easier place of descent."

"Go up!" I replied. "From the place where we stand, to go up is utterly impossible."

"Difficult, sir," said Wolfe, "but I do not think impossible! I observed this place from beneath, and I am satisfied that the black-looking canopy over our heads is merely a ledge of the rock jutting out from the main mass—just as the canopy of a pulpit, sir, juts out from the wall of the church. At least so it seemed to me from below; and I think if we could once get upon the top of it, we might then manage to mount still higher."

"If we could get upon the top of it," said I; "but how is this to be done!"

"I can't tell you how it is to be *done*, sir," said Wolfe;

“but I’ll at least show you how it is to be *attempted*! Remain you, in the meantime, where you are, sir. If I succeed, I can easily pull you up after me; if I fall, why, when all’s done, what is it but an end of Dick Wolfe, who must die one day at any rate! Farewell! sir, should we never meet again.”

“’Tis madness to attempt it!” I cried. “Stop! for God’s sake consider what you do!”

“Never say die, while there’s a shot in the locker, sir; that’s my maxim. So here goes!”

Before I could interfere to prevent him, the intrepid fellow stretched his hands upwards, and grasping a projecting part of our rude rocky canopy, he was in an instant swinging in mid-air by the arms. Without shifting the position of his hands, but pulling himself upwards by sheer muscular force, his head and shoulders were soon hid from my view, while his legs and the lower part of his body hung dangling over the edge of the rock.

It was a moment of painful suspense to me. As to whether he was likely to succeed in his design, or be precipitated to the bottom, I could not form the slightest conjecture, for not a sound of fear or of hope escaped the gallant fellow’s lips. Slowly and gradually, however, his quivering limbs were drawn upwards, till they entirely disappeared; and, the next moment, my ears were saluted from above by a loud and spirit-stirring “*Hurrah!*”

That he had succeeded in reaching the top of the ledge, which hung frowning over the place where I stood, I was now certified; but how I should be able to follow him in so difficult an ascent still seemed a mystery. Presently, however, a bare arm was suspended over the edge of the canopy, the huge brawny tendons of which seemed almost sufficient to lift the rock itself. At the same time, the voice of Wolfe was heard holloing from above.

“All’s right, Mr. Lascelles! Catch hold of my hand, and trust yourself to me!”

“Are you firm?” I cried out.

“Ay, ay, sir, as the rock itself!”

“Then hold fast—here goes!”

Stretching myself up as far as I could, I succeeded in grasping him with both my hands round the wrist. For one moment I was swinging to and fro in the air; the next I stood in safety beside my trusty comrade.

The space we now occupied was considerably larger than that we had just left; but a tall mass of black rock, yet to be surmounted, frowned threateningly over us!

"Follow me, sir!" said Wolfe. "We must not halt till we get to the top;" and he forthwith commenced the ascent, I following behind.

The rock here was more craggy and broken than it was below, and afforded greater facilities to the climber. Without much difficulty, we succeeded in passing from one ledge to another, till at length, to our inexpressible joy, we found ourselves on the highest summit of all—a round flat space, of some fifty or sixty feet in diameter.

"Now for a splice of the main-brace, Wolfe?" said I, producing a small flask of spirits.

"Ay, ay, sir; here's luck to us down again!" and the worthy coxswain quaffed as much at a draught as would have sufficed to make most heads unsteady.

Having reached the top, half of our labour was accomplished; our next anxiety was, how we were to reach the bottom.

"Had we not better try the other side of the rock?" I suggested.

"Never, sir!" said Wolfe; "it would be utter madness. The weather-side of a rock, in these constant winds, becomes brittle and trustless. The very birds that hover over our heads would not venture to perch upon the weather-side of the Sugar Loaf. But here," he continued, "is a place where I think we might venture. The rock here, sir, you will observe, is shelving and rugged, and affords some opportunity of clinging by our hands, when our footing is faithless. Shall we try?"

"Certainly," I replied; "if you advise it."

"Then let us strip to the trousers, sir. I am too old a cragsman, to trust myself, in a difficult descent, with a weight of clothes upon my back. Nothing like a bare foot for a slippery footing!"

We stripped accordingly, as he directed; and having hailed the boat to lie more off, we tossed our clothes over the precipice, in such a direction that they might easily be picked up beneath. In a few minutes we were prepared to start.

"Now, Wolfe," said I, "who goes first!"

“ I, of course,” he replied.

“ By no means,” said I, “ In such a situation as ours all rank sinks to the ground !”

“ Then, would to God, sir,” said Wolfe, with a bitter smile—“ would to God, sir, the ground would sink along with it, and leave us, without farther ado, to breast the waves of old mother Ocean !”

“ But since that’s not likely to happen,” I replied, “ we had better settle which of us shall go first. Come ! shall it be a toss-up ?”

“ As you please, sir !”

I gathered up a small piece of flat stone, and wetting it on one side with my tongue, as I had often done at school, I tossed it twirling up into the air.

“ Wet, or no wet !” I cried.

“ No wet !” said Wolfe ; and no wet it was ; so the lot to be first in the perilous descent fell to me.

“ Warily, warily, sir !” said Wolfe, as I dropped over the edge of the precipice ; “ never loosen your hands till your foot is firm !”

“ My foot is firm *now*,” I replied ; “ come along !”

But scarcely had I unfastened my hands from the edge of the rock, in order to allow Wolfe to follow, when the faithless prop on which I rested began to tremble beneath me. I tried to clasp some of the protruding angels in my neighbourhood, to save myself. But in vain. My weight was too much for the stone on which I stood, which speedily detached itself from the parent rock, and bounded with a loud crash to the bottom.

Never shall I forget the sensations of that moment. I grasped at every angle I could reach ; but all my efforts could only retard, not stop, my downward progress ; and I was just about to give myself up to my fate, when I found myself firmly grasped by the hair of the head, and looking up, I saw Wolfe bending over the rock above me. With the support of his arm and my own exertions, I succeeded, most unexpectedly, in once more reaching the top.

“ Thank God !” cried the generous fellow, when I again stood at his side. “ Had you fallen, Mr. Lascelles, I should never have forgiven myself. No ! never shall it be said that Richard Wolfe permitted a boy to precede

him when danger was in the question. Come on, sir! Follow me, and trust to my directions as to placing your feet. With God's help, I hope we may yet reach the bottom in safety."

"Wolfe," I replied, "I dispute precedence no longer. Go on—I follow!"

With our faces turned towards the rock, and with the utmost possible caution, we again commenced the descent; my faithful comrade constantly calling out to me as we proceeded—"Place your feet here, Mr. Lascelles, and here."

At length, with considerable difficulty, but in perfect safety, we reached the bottom.

The galley backed into the rock to receive us; and we had just stepped on board, when we were startled by the report of a musket. We pushed off with all the speed we could; another shot was fired. They proceeded from the look-outs I had stationed on shore.

"It's a small craft, sir, steering for the island," said Wolfe. "We had better make all speed to be in time to receive her."

"True," I replied. "Let us take to our oars. Stretch out, men; pull for your lives!"

CHAPTER VII.

PROVIDING FOR A DEBAUCH.

Il était un roi d'Yvetot,
 Peu connu dans l'histoire;
 Se levant tard, se couchant tôt,
 Il dormait fort bien sans gloire.

BERANGER.

WE reached our destination, and got on shore before the stranger had neared the harbour.

"Who is she?" said I, to one of the men assembled on the beach.

"Why, sir, I think she's one of them large canoes belonging to the Mauritius, sir."

“And yonder,” cried Wolfe, “comes the Hesperus’s pinnace in chase of her!”

“If she’s a canoe,” said I, observing that the stranger was cutting rapidly through the water under a much heavier press of sail than it is usual for such vessels to carry in a breeze; “if she’s a canoe, as her build bespeaks her, she’s one of the best sailers of the kind I ever saw breast a billow.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” said one of the men; “you may take your oath the hand that holds the rudder there is up to the business.”

The Hesperus’s pinnace was coming rapidly in from the same quarter, apparently endeavouring to overtake her; but in vain. The canoe crept fast away from her pursuer; and as she approached more near the shore, we could perceive that she was manned by negroes, from whom shouts of merriment and peals of laughter, from time to time, proceeded. Her steersman was apparently well acquainted with the landing-place; for, after having rounded the point of rock which serves, as I have said, as a sort of breakwater to the harbour, he brought his little vessel adroitly up to the wind, and, running her fearlessly through the surf, beached her in gallant style. As soon as she touched the sand, the negro crew leaped out, and, in a few seconds, hauled her up far beyond the usual reach of the curling waves.

The steersman, meanwhile, continued to keep his seat, still holding the tiller under his arm; and it was only when his little vessel was “high and dry,” that he rose up, and stretching forth his hand with an affected pomposity of demeanour, stepped with much ceremony over the gunwale.

“Aha!” he exclaimed, as soon as he was fairly placed upon the sand; “aha! vous avez donc gagné la partie, Monsieur Jean—toujours vainqueur!—Cependant, c’est un joli chaloupe!” he continued, as he folded his hand into a sort of hollow tube, and held it to his eye, seeming to contemplate the pinnace through it with much satisfaction.

Not knowing who this uninvited visitor was, I took the opportunity of examining him narrowly. He was a short thick-set man, apparently about fifty years of age; and it

was evident, from the massive build of his form, that in his younger days he had been possessed of great muscular power. He was dressed in a white cotton jacket, with a yellow coloured silk handkerchief coiled loosely round his neck. His pantaloons were of blue cotton, made to fit tight to the leg; his feet and ankles were invested in a pair of short leather boots of a tawny hue, and his head was covered with a most umbrageous Panama straw-hat. Under his left arm he carried an old double-barrelled gun, with very long Spanish barrels.

His countenance was of that peculiarly striking description, which, once seen, cannot easily be forgotten. His cheeks and nose were considerably indented by the small pox, but they still retained their originally florid colour; and a large scar of a deep purple hue ran diagonally across his forehead and over his right eye, the ball of which was white and rayless. But what his right orb wanted in vivacity, was amply compensated by the left, which was small and sparkling, and looked out most piercingly from beneath a huge shaggy eyebrow. His features were large and coarse and conveyed an expression in which hardihood—I had almost said ferocity—and good-humour, were singularly and conspicuously blended.

Having congratulated himself on his victory over the pinnacle, by sundry French ejaculations of delight, he at last turned his attention to me, and advancing towards me, lifted his immense Panama from his head, and bowed with strained politeness almost to the ground.

“Monsieur, j’ai l’honneur de vous saluer,” he said, “Je suis enchanté de vous voir dans ma petite terre!”

“I ask pardon, sir,” I replied drily; “I have not the honour of your acquaintance,”

“Est-il possible!” he cried, with a broad good-humoured leer; “not know me, qui tout le monde connaît comme son pere. Monsieur, mon nom c’est Jean Boismaison, propriétaire di cette ile ci—proprietor of dis islan, sair, at your service;” and again he bowed very low.

“If you are the proprietor of the island, sir,” I replied, “I am glad to see you here. Is there any thing in which I can serve you at present?”

“Serve me!” he cried, “pas de tout sair, not at all. Sair, I shall dine wid you, sair! On m’a dit que je trou-

verais de braves gens ici, et croyez moi je n'ai pas oublié les munitions de bouche. Caton!" he continued, addressing one of his negroes; "vite! portez les vivres vers les cabane!—vite!"—and presently a load of provisions, poultry, hams, eau-de-vie, and a case of choice Château Margaux, were carried from the canoe into the hut.

There was a winning mixture of non-chalance, good-humour, and facetiousness in the demeanour of Monsieur Jean, that was perfectly irresistible; and in a few minutes he and I were the best friends possible. I shook him cordially by the hand, and welcomed both himself and his provisions to Flat Island.

Meantime the pinnace had shortened sail, and come to an anchor under the lee of the rocky point already mentioned. Our small canoe was instantly despatched to bring the crew ashore, and among the rest I was glad to find my friend Neville. Monsieur Jean and the lieutenant immediately recognised each other as old acquaintances, and the latter had to submit to a good deal of banter from the caustic Frenchman for having allowed a pinnace to be beat by a canoe.

The day being Saturday, our party was soon joined by some more of my brother officers, and Monsieur Jean looked forward with great delight to spending what he called "*une soirée agréable*." The afternoon was spent in shooting; and in the field our French guest displayed great skill as a marksman, killing hares at full speed with a single ball, and seldom missing his aim.

At seven o'clock we sat down to dinner; and never did the state room of the palace ring with more boisterous merriment than on this occasion. The furniture of our feast was certainly by no means elegant, but the fare itself was not to be despised. Fish and game, and poultry dressed and curried in all manner of ways by Monsieur Jean's negro cook, and washed down with plentiful potations of excellent claret, might have tempted the palates of more particular and worse appetized guests than ourselves.

As soon as the cloth was removed and the bottles ranged on the table, we were surprised by the entrance of a negro carrying a couple of huge sacks stuffed with straw. What these could be meant for we were at a loss to surmise.

Not a little embarrassed by the bulk of what he carried, the man with some difficulty made his way up to the place where Monsieur Jean sat, with a huge rummer-glass full of claret before him; and after making a respectful obeisance, he deposited his burden on the floor by the side of his master's chair.

We first looked at each other, and then at Monsieur Jean, for an explanation of all this; but he, seeming to enjoy our astonishment, said not a word, but kept laughing and sipping his wine with most mysterious perseverance. At last striking his clenched fist on the table, and glancing his grey eye at the sacks by his side, he cried out at the top of his voice—

“Allons mes amis!—allons!—buvons franchement!—joyeuxment!—à l'Anglais! allons—gai! VOICI MON LIT!—dis is my bed, mes enfans!”

Having made such neat and comfortable provision for a purposed state of inebriety, the facetious Frenchman now began to ply the bottle in good earnest. Toasts and sentiments in abundance went round; and Monsieur Jean kept us in a perfect roar of laughter; the wit of his observations, expressed as they were in bad English, interlarded with French terms and oaths, being quite irresistible.

We learned from his conversation that he had served on the Spanish main in his youth, on board a vessel which he modestly termed a privateer, though he took no pains to conceal that free trader, or perhaps pirate, would have been the more appropriate appellation. He informed us farther, that he had been for several years established as a cotton-planter at the Mauritius, and that he contrived to spend as merry a life as he could; being always glad to fall in with a set of “gens braves” like ourselves, and never losing sight of his favourite maxim—“*Que la vraie sagesse consiste en buvant, rirant, dormant!*”

“Oui, mes amis,” he cried, “I've live von ver long time in de worl', and I've learn von grand maxime. I vill tell it to you, because I've von grand estime for you. Follow it, mes enfans; follow it, et soyez joyeux! Moi-même, I've follow it pendant la vie—for my whole life. Croyez moi, c'et bonne! I am à présent in my ten lustre, cependant je dis gaiment, *Vive la bagatelle!*”

“ Well, what is it ? ” we all cried out, eager to learn the extent of Monsieur Jean’s philosophy.

“ Mes enfans,” he replied, throwing a cast of unwonted gravity into his countenance while he spoke ; “ mes enfans, la voici : MANGEZ CHAUD, BUVEZ FRAIS, ET FAITES L’AMOUR COMME VOUS POURREZ !—Ah ! mes amis,” he continued, “ I see dat de name de l’amour has make you all ver’ tristes ; but I vill sing to you von chanson marine, dat vill make you gai vonce more ; ” and, having cleared his voice, the facetious Monsieur Jean chanted forth in very good style the following French sea-song, which, as it is unique in its kind, I shall not apologize for presenting to my readers.

CHANSON MARINE.

Chacun à sa Philosophie,
Un marin à la sienne aussi :
Sur ma Frégate je défie
Et les chagrins et les soucis.
Pour les dompter,
Les éviter,
Toujours avec moi j’embarque la Folie !
Dans mons hamac,
Sur le tillac,
Je me distrais en fumant mon tabac ;
Et quand ma pipe est allumée,
Je me dis, “ Que sout les grandeurs,
Les biens, la gloire, la renommée ?
Ah ! ma foi, de la fumée ! ” [ter]

Traversant la mer de la vie,
Tachons d’arriver à bon port,
Vivons sans haine et sans envie,
Toujours content de notre sort,
De la bonté,
De la gaité,
D’être immortels n’ayant pas la manie.
Le plus savant
A vu souvent,
Tous ses écrits emportés par le vent ;
N’usons donc par en vain notre encre ;
L’onde s’enva, no revient plus,
Et morbleu ! dans cette mer là
On ne jette pas l’ancre ! [ter]

At a late hour in the evening, the copious potations in

which we had indulged began to have their usual effect upon us all. As for the honest Frenchman, he became more and more talkative and less intelligible every glass he drank, till at last he fairly tumbled from his chair, and rolled over on his straw-stuffed couch, in a state of most blissful forgetfulness.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land;
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
 From wandering on a foreign strand?

SCOTT.

It has been sagely remarked by the ingenious Asmodeus, that in the moral as well as in the physical world, all things proceed in a never-ceasing, ever-recurring circle; and hence it is that in affairs of men there is nothing either permanent or new. The fantastic day-dreams of human power and human greatness flit in illusive procession before us, and vanish ere they can be well secured. It is Adrian, renown, regret, and then another Adrian: it is Napoleon, conquest, unbounded power, and then a narrow prison.

For myself, I found that I was not destined to form any exception to the general doom of humanity. Like Sancho Panza's, my island-governorship, "though brilliant, was brief," and scarcely had I enjoyed it for six weeks, when I was summoned to rejoin the ship. I accordingly abdicated my vice-regal state with becoming submission; and, strange though it may appear, it was not only without regret, but with unmingled satisfaction, that I renounced the splendours of my "palace," and resumed once more my humble berth on board the *Hesperus*.

Our repairs, which had been for some time in progress, were just completed, when the — frigate arrived to

relieve us from our present station, and we received orders to proceed to England for the purpose of being paid off.

Those who have not experienced it, can scarcely appreciate the pleasure which the receipt of homeward bound orders diffuses on board a ship that has been out on a long station in foreign seas. To us youngsters, especially, who were now about to return from our first cruise, the anticipation of home was truly delightful. No sooner were the welcome tidings announced, than imagination was active in picturing all the pleasures that awaited us on our arrival. Already, in anticipation, we entered the house where we first saw the light, and visited all the loved haunts of our childhood. Parents, friends, relations, playmates—with perhaps some “fair-haired child,” who was associated, we could not well tell why, in all our reminiscences—busy fancy gathered together in one smiling group, all met to receive and to welcome us. We pictured to ourselves the pride that would beam in the countenance of the mother, when he whom she sent away a romping school-boy, should return to her arms a travelled man; one who had encountered dangers, and visited foreign climes, and listened to foreign tongues. And then the rapture with which the smiling circle, gathered round the evening fire, would listen to all the wondrous tales we had to tell; the sister’s timid and shrinking looks when we painted the manners of the barbarous nations we had seen; the brother’s glance of pride when he spoke of tempest and of battle; and the approving smile of the father when he listened to some tale of duty done. With these and similar day-dreams, we shortened the hours of many a middle watch; overleaping, on the light wings of fancy, the broad ocean that still separated us from beloved England.

A week sufficed to gather in the parties that had been stationed at the various signal posts, and we got under weigh from the Bell-buoy, amid the regrets and good wishes of all our friends, and the ill-suppressed delight of such of our plantation acquaintances as had felt the presence of the *Hesperus* to be a check upon their illicit slave-trade. Three weeks more brought us to our old quarters in Simon’s Bay; though not before we had re-

ceived a parting salute from the Cape L'Aguilhas in the shape of a heavy north-wester, so severe, that it was for some time doubted whether the *Hesperus* would be able to weather it. Skilful management, however, and a good sea-boat, carried us through; though our foremast and bowsprit were both so badly sprung in the gale, that it was found necessary to replace them before proceeding on our voyage.

The delay occasioned by this accident was no slight cause of grumbling to us youngsters, whose thoughts and desires were for the present centered on home. Captain Morley, in the meantime, took advantage of the opportunity to go over to Cape Town on a visit to the Governor, and he was kind enough to permit me to accompany him.

How truly has the poet said of man, that he is "to one thing constant never!" In the society of my Cape Town acquaintances I almost forgot my anxiety for home. A few pic-nic parties in the neighbouring country, a dinner at Constantia, and a day at Zwart Clip, put me in such perfect good-humour with my present situation, that it was even with something like regret that I at last received intelligence of the *Hesperus* being again ready to proceed on her voyage.

Ten days more, and St. Helena hove in sight. But where were now the numerous well-appointed men-of-war that, on our former visit, cruised round its rocky coast; the cannon that bristled its batteries; the signal-posts that surmounted its rugged promontories, and gave intelligence of all that passed within and without? The great Napoleon was no more, and with him had vanished all "the pomp and circumstance of war." Instead of the gay troops that formerly crowded the streets of the town, and the mounted picquets that traversed the country, nothing was now to be seen but a few lazy yam-stocks, lounging about the dismantled batteries, and awaiting the uncertain arrival of such Indiamen as either profit or pleasure might induce to visit their now deserted island. Like Ferrara, St. Helena derived its temporary fame from being a great man's prison, and it was now only remembered as being a great man's grave. A gallop to the tomb of Napoleon, a saunter through Plantation Gardens, a visit to the harbour which I had once considered as the bower of love, a

sigh for Sophia, and adieu to "St. Helena's rock-bound shore."

Prosperous winds and bright anticipations accompanied us during the rest of our voyage, which at length rapidly approached its termination.

One night I chanced to have the middle watch, and Strangways was the officer in charge of the deck. I was pacing about in silence, thinking, as usual, of friends and home, when I was startled by the voice of the look-out at the mast-head.

"On the deck there!"

"Hilloa!"

"A light two points on the lee-bow!"

"Two points on the lee-bow!" cried Strangways.

"Then, it must be the Lizard!—Hurrah!"

The Lizard! Who can describe the mingled emotions of delight, and hope, and impatience, and anxiety, and fear, which occupy the breast of the homeward-bound seaman, when this far-famed beacon is first announced! Fain would I have mounted the rigging to get a peep at it; but duty confined me to my station, and I was obliged to wait with patience until it should become visible from the deck.

Captain Morley had been for some time retired to his cabin, and Strangways went below to communicate to him the tidings. The night was dark, the sky obscured by dense clouds, and not a star was visible in the firmament. I kept my eye firmly fixed in the direction of the land; and as we were going through the water at a rapid rate, it was not long till I discovered, in the extreme distance, something that resembled a solitary planet.

"Can yonder tiny spark be the Lizard, sir?" I said to Strangways, who at the moment returned from below.

"Hurrah!" cried the jolly lieutenant, tossing his cap in the air, and grasping me cordially by the hand. "I give you joy! The old Lizard it is, and no other! Come, my boy! Everything is as it should be; our reckoning correct to a mile, and a fine rattling nine-knot breeze from the south-west carrying us up channel. The captain, God bless him, is snug in his cot, and I don't think he is likely to rouse out to greet his old acquaintance. So, jump down to my cabin, will you; and fetch up a bottle of champagne, which you will find in the locker. We must

drink, JOY TO OLD ENGLAND! Quick! in case the captain *should* come!"

Having received the bearing and distance of the said bottle, I dived below, and presently returned, bearing it triumphantly in one hand, while some cold junk and biscuit loaded the other.

"Should the captain chance to come upon us," I said, as I placed the eatables on the deck, "what will he say to our boozing champagne upon watch! You know how strict a disciplinarian he is!"

"I don't care," cried the jovial lieutenant, "though the whole Board, with the First Lord at their head, should come upon us! I am determined to drink my toast. Why, I have stored up the bottle full six months on purpose. Quick, my boy! Out with the cork and no more about it!"

I accordingly untwisted the wire after the most approved method, and I was just proceeding to cut the string, when I descried a hat, not easily mistaken, emerging from the after-ladder.

"The captain, sir!" I whispered to my companion, as, smuggling the bottle under my jacket, I was about to bolt round the main-mast from the gangway to my proper station on the lee-side.

"Keep all fast youngster!" cried the jolly lieutenant, nothing daunted. "What the d—l are you frightened for! Out with the cork, I say! quick!"

In an instant my knife had done its office; the string was severed, and away flew the cork into the waist with a loud exhilarating pop.

"Hilloa!" cried the captain, who at this moment stepped up to us. "What's all this, gentlemen!"

"Champagne, sir!" replied Strangways, advancing towards him with the bottle in one hand and a glass in the other; "and I trust you will be inclined to overlook the breach of discipline when you consider the occasion. The Lizard is beaming right a-head, and we were about to drink, JOY TO OLD ENGLAND!"

"That is a toast which I shall never refuse to pledge," replied Morley, taking in his hand the creaming glass which the lieutenant proffered, and draining it to the bottom as he spoke. "But recollect, gentlemen, I do not permit my officers to pass their time during watch in

drinking champagne ! Such a proceeding is contrary to all rule ; so—why—so—the sooner you finish the bottle and attend to your duty the better !”

When daylight appeared—for leaving the deck at the expiration of the watch was impossible—our eyes were greeted by the glad sight of the cliffs of dear England. Our impatience to be on shore was now redoubled ; and though we were running up channel at a good rate, before a fine fresh breeze, the Hesperus seemed to linger among the waters.

In the course of the morning we were hailed by a pilot-boat, and we hove to for the purpose of gathering news. A little puny insignificant craft she was ; but we saw her with feelings which, under other circumstances, the best appointed man-of-war would have failed to produce. To us there was an indescribable sort of fascination in the idea, that only a few hours before this little boat had actually left an English port, that her crew had actually trodden upon English soil, and had spoken to English people in the English tongue. Much did we envy the captain, when the pilot was brought on board and sent down to *the* cabin.*

I was leaning over the gangway ; the boat, with her crew, was lying alongside immediately beneath me. Anxious to ascertain what news there was, and what of good or evil had happened in England during the long four years of my absence, I ventured to hail a fine weather-beaten old fellow, who was very quietly chewing his quid in the stern-sheets.

“ Any news ?” I inquired, in an under tone of voice, almost dreading his reply, lest the tidings should be of evil import.

“ Why, no, sir,” replied the man, with one hand showing his little tarpaulin hat from his brows, and hitching up the band of his trousers with the other ; “ nothing very particular, sir. Only pilchard fishing’s uncommon slack—very !”

“ Interesting !” thought I, as I turned away, determined not to risk any farther interrogatories.

We carried our favourable breeze to Spithead, and sa-

* The captain’s cabin—so called *par excellence*.

luted the Admiral with seventeen guns. Next day we proceeded into the harbour, and in a fortnight more we were paid off, when we prepared to depart each for his respective home.

The total dispersion of a crew, that for four years had lived so harmoniously together, considerably damped the joyful feelings that would otherwise have been paramount on this occasion; and notwithstanding my anxiety to re-join my friends, it was with a heavy heart that I took leave of my comrades, and, having shaken hands with the benevolent Morley, turned my back for ever on *THE HAPPY HESPERUS*.

CHAPTER IX.

AN AFFAIR OF THE HEART.

Oh, 'tis sweet to think that where'er we rove
 We're sure to find something blissful and dear,
 And that when we're far from the lips we love
 We've but to make love to the lips we're near.

MOORE.

Quand on n'a pas ce qu'on aime,
 Il faut aimer ce qu'on a.

As the route of Strangways, Neville, and myself, lay in the same direction as far as London, we determined to proceed thither in company, and for this purpose we secured our places in one of the "Portsmouth stages."

It was a fine bright and bracing October morning when we started on our journey, "rolling along the turnpike," on the top of the Regulator, with all the speed at which a team of four fine bays could carry us.

There were at the time of which I speak, as there are still, numerous coaches belonging to rival proprietors, plying on the road between Portsmouth and London, each of which was urged on the attention of the public by the usual expedients. In the advertisement which proclaimed the many advantages that attended travelling by the Regulator, there was placed, in the strong relief of a separate

line and large letters, the announcement—" *One driver through!*" How far this proved to be really an advantage, the reader will presently have an opportunity of judging.

Our Jehu, who was known on the road by the familiar appellation of Bill, was a middle-aged man, of a stout corpulent figure, and a complexion of which the weather-born bronze, gradually deepening into a dark purple round the region of the nose, betokened a close familiarity with gin and ale. He wore a smart bottle-green jockey-coat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons. A pair of mahogany-topped boots, and shining white cord breeches, adorned his nether man, and a huge broad-brimmed white hat surmounted his head. His button-hole was ornamented by the English coachman's greatest pride—a full-blown cabbage rose, and a goodly sprig of southern-wood.

In driving, Bill prided himself in being an adept. He squared his elbows and handled his reins with the air of one who knows his business, making his long four-in-hand whip crack above the ears of his leaders with the greatest possible adroitness. As long as our route lay within the town, it required all his vigilance to steer his way through the crowded thoroughfares, and it was in vain that we attempted to draw him into conversation; but no sooner were we clear of the streets, than he showed that taciturnity was by no means his foible.

"There's a team for you, gentlemen!" he said, eyeing with infinite complacency the really beautiful horses, as they pranced along in gallant style. "That off-wheel horse has won two plates in his day, and taken heaven knows how many brushes—isn't he a rare un to trot! sixteen miles an hour's clean nothing to him. Look you, now—they give me forty minutes to go this stage; see if I don't do it in the half hour, and bring in my tits as fresh as daisies, without a turned hair. You were observing that you're just come from sea, gentlemen—arrived, no doubt, with one of them ships as was paid off the other day?—Ay, that's your sort; a light heart, a full purse, and a bright eye for a petticoat! Well, blow me if you shan't see as pretty a bar-maid at the next stage as ever handled a porter-pot; and one that's up to a bit of a lark, too, I'll warrant her."

As he intimated, little more than half an hour was requisite to bring us to the stage in question, and Bill having directed the hostler not to be in a hurry with the horses, as he was "summat within time," invited us to follow him into the private parlour of the little inn. Here a supply of liquor was speedily produced and as speedily consumed; by far the greater proportion finding its way down the capacious throat of our worthy driver, who kept up a sort of flying flirtation with the pretty bar-maid, winking and nodding to us from time to time in order that his wit and pleasantry might not pass unobserved.

At every stage on the road, and at every pot-house between stâges where a glass of liquor could be procured, the same scene was enacted, of course at our expense; and such were Bill's herculean potatory powers, that the quantity of liquor which he embibed seemed to produce no other effect on him than that of deepening the purple and brightening the carbuncles that garnished his physiognomy.

Bacchus, however, is not a god to be trifled with. By degrees it became evident that the liquor which Bill had taken was doing its work; his tongue moved more and more sluggishly, and the lies he told became more and more exaggerated and fearless. On every opportunity that offered he took care to afford us some proof of his expertness in driving; now making the wheels run close on the edge of some steep bank or ditch, now cutting in between carriages where the space seemed quite insufficient for the purpose of passing, and now wheeling round the corners and windings of the road, with a sharpness and rapidity which in so small degree jeopardized the necks of his passengers. Still, as if by a sort of habitual instinctiveness, he continued to hold the reins firmly, and to keep his team tolerably well together, turning round to us, after the performance of each new feat, with a peculiar leer on his face which seemed to say, "What do you think of that, eh!"

As we approached the suburbs of London, and the thoroughfares became more crowded, the opportunities of showing his dexterity increased. Coaches, carts, and carriages, were successively passed with hair-breadth proximity, and, what seemed to me almost miraculous, without accident.

"You're a good hand at a shave, Bill," I observed to him, after he had just cleared a huge wagon by running the coach past it without the slightest collision.

"In course," replied Bill, "and why not! Ay, ay, it's easy enough to drive along a rode with a couple of yards open space on either side; but show me the man that can carry his coach safe through, and not a quarter of an inch to spare. Look ye, now. You see that 'ere carriage with the couple of bays trundling along before us? I warrant you that fat liveried lout on the box knows no more of his business than if he were the driver of a common dray cart. See what a range the fellow takes when he passes a wagon; and now you may be sworn he hears me coming up behind him with my spankers, and he's pulling off the road to give me room to pass. Room to pass the nigger! He may give it if he like; but I be d—d if I take it! No! no! that's not my way! I'll let you see me shave him as clean as your own beard of a Sunday morning. C'up, my beauties, c'up!"

The driver of the carriage in question, hearing the stage coach coming rapidly up behind, had drawn off the road to allow it room to pass; but Bill, being in no humour to take advantage of the space thus afforded him, determined to show how near he could go without touching. Whether it was however, that he had miscalculated his distance, or that his hand was not so steady as usual, I cannot determine, but no sooner did he come up with the carriage than the coach came in violent collision with its wheels, and both vehicles were upset in different directions. Fortunately for myself, I was thrown from the box into a neighbouring hedge; and having received no farther injury than a few slight scratches, I hastened to render what assistance I could to my companions.

I was proceeding to lift up poor Bill, who was lying in the middle of the road, evidently very much hurt, when my attention was attracted towards the carriage which had been the innocent cause of our misfortune, by observing a white scarf or veil, of which I caught a glimpse through the broken glass of the window. The hope of being useful to a female in such an emergency, induced me to abandon Bill to the tender mercies of the bystanders, and hasten to the prostrate carriage. Having in vain

endeavoured to open the door, of which the lock had been twisted in the overset, I succeeded with some difficulty in extracting the object of my solicitude through the window ; and lifting her in my arms, I placed her gently on the ground.

“ Are you hurt, madam ? ” was my first eager inquiry.

“ No, sir,” she replied, “ I am not hurt—but my father—O my father ! ”

She said this in a tone of voice so extremely feeble that I thought it indicated a degree of faintness. The thick white veil which she wore completely shaded her face ; and with the intention of affording her a freer circulation of air, I imprudently laid my hand upon the fringe to lift it up. She started as if I had been about to commit a sacrilege, and gently motioning my hand away, urged me not to think of her, but to render what assistance I could to her father.

Her voice, though faint from weakness and agitation, was so exquisitely modulated, that it fell upon my ear like the sweetest music ; and as I took a hasty glance at her figure, I thought I had never seen anything more perfectly graceful.

Some of the bystanders were now engaged in extricating the gentleman from the overturned carriage, and I hastened to assist them. The task, however, was more difficult than I anticipated. In the first shock of the collision, he had imprudently thrust his head from the window, and had received a violent concussion in the fall. He now lay stunned and motionless ; and it was only after we had forced the door from its hinges that we succeeded in lifting him out, in a state of total insensibility, the blood streaming from a wound in his head.

By this time the crowd attracted by the accident had considerably increased, and among the rest there was a surgeon, who, chancing to pass at the moment, had humanely stopped to see if he could render any assistance. It was impossible for any arrival to be more opportune. He directed the unfortunate gentleman to be conveyed into a neighbouring house ; and having carefully examined his bruises, he declared there was no cause for serious alarm, as the blow on his head was not dangerous, and had merely stunned him. In this he proved to be correct ;

for after a small quantity of blood had been taken from his arm, the gentleman began to revive and to recover his recollection.

His first inquiry was after his daughter, who, during the whole time, had watched over him with the most tender assiduity. But it was in vain that I attempted to catch a glimpse of her face. The veil which I had so imprudently attempted to lift still screened it from my view; and although this was from time to time withdrawn, whilst she performed the different offices of attention to her father, it was carefully replaced whenever she stood in such a position as brought her within range of my eye.

At length the surgeon declared that the patient was sufficiently recovered to be removed home, and he politely offered the use of his own carriage for this purpose. I was sadly disappointed at this arrangement, for I had resolved to offer myself as an escort, being impressed with an irresistible desire to prosecute my acquaintance with the fair unknown. As, however, the surgeon himself was to accompany them, any offer of my services would have seemed obtrusive, and nothing therefore was left to me but to assist in handing them into the carriage.

I had closed the door, and was just about to ask permission to pay my respects at the house next day. I felt, however, unaccountably embarrassed on the occasion; and before I could frame my wish in suitable words, the lady interrupted me, by requesting that I would add to the favours already conferred by inquiring after the fate of their coachman, to whom, in the bustle of the moment, they had not had time to attend. I bowed my acquiescence; but before I could utter a word the carriage drove off and left me.

“Such a figure! such a voice!” I said to myself, as I hurried away to look after my companions, and ascertain what had become of the gentleman’s coachman. “Had I only seen her face!—but I *shall* call tomorrow!”

Strangways and Neville, I found, had escaped with a few inconsiderable bruises, and they were now both busily engaged in ministering to the wants of poor Bill, who had been removed into a neighbouring change-house very severely hurt. Thither the unfortunate coachman of whom I was in search had also been conveyed, with his leg

badly fractured. The poor fellow was in great pain, nor could I get him to speak a single word coherently, until I had procured the attendance of a surgeon, who set the broken bones and let him blood. He then fell into a profound sleep; and awakening after a couple of hours more collected, I ascertained from him the name and residence of his master, to whom I determined to pay my respects on the following morning.

The coach was by this time restored to her wheels, and a driver having been provided to carry us forward, my companions and myself—having left a little money at the inn, with strict injunctions that the patients should be properly attended to—proceeded on our journey. After a short drive we reached the city, and took up our quarters at the Tavistock.

In talking over the events of the day, Strangways and Neville took occasion to rally me a good deal on the rapturous manner in which I spoke of my veiled beauty. Indeed, I could not help wondering at my own susceptibility, in being so much smitten by a person whose face I had never seen. It was in vain that I endeavoured to excuse myself in my own eyes, by attributing the interest I felt, not to the lady herself, but to her unfortunate father; the musical tones of her voice still rung in my ear, and her graceful figure flitted in imagination before me.

“You had better not prosecute this adventure any farther,” said Strangways. “Ten to one the lady is old and ugly, and her father nothing more than a retired soap-boiler. At all events, should she chance to be handsome, depend upon it she is likely to turn up her nose, be it ever so straight, at a poor middy, who carries his whole fortune in his pocket. Come, come, Ned, help yourself to a glass of wine, and think no more about it; and next time you fall in love, make it a point to get a previous glimpse at the lady’s physiognomy! What would you now say to her being some half-cast beauty, with a face as tawny as a copper stew-pan!”

I was not, however, to be laughed out of my adventure and though I said nothing of my purpose, I determined to wait upon the lady next morning, to inquire after her father’s health.

I accordingly dressed myself to as much advantage as

my somewhat scanty wardrobe would admit, and stealing out of the hotel without saying a word to my companions I threw myself into a hackney coach, and drove off direct for —— Square.

“Master is rather easier this morning,” said a smart-looking livery servant, in reply to my inquiries.

“Is your mistress within at present?”

“Yes, sir,” was the reply; “please step this way, sir.”

My heart beat quick as I ascended the staircase, and was ushered into a handsome ante-room. There was no one there. I gave my name to the servant, stating at the same time the object of my visit, and he departed to announce me to his mistress.

Everything in the apartment gave evidence of taste and refinement. In one corner stood a frame for embroidery work, in another a harp; and open, on a small rosewood work-table, lay a beautifully illustrated copy of Tasso's *Aminta*. The walls were hung round with exquisite engravings from some of the most famous pictures of the roman school; and several landscapes, beautifully executed in water colours, and marked with the initials *C. M.*, which were written in a small Italian character, I was inclined to attribute to the hand of my fair unseen.

“At all events,” I thought to myself, “she must be accomplished. These drawings are charmingly executed, and as an accompaniment to the harp, that voice! I trust in heaven she is handsome!”

Scarcely had I concluded this sagacious reflection when the door opened, and the object of my curiosity entered.

If I was before struck with the elegance of her figure, what was the effect produced by the contemplation of her face. I thought it was the most perfect countenance I had ever beheld. The thick clusters of her raven-black hair were braided over a high, intellectual forehead, of almost dazzling whiteness; her eye was dark and sparkling, its fire in some degree tempered by the shadow of her long silken eye-lashes; and the moulding of the lower features of her face were of such extreme elegance and delicacy as to remind me of those chosen by Canova as the model for his Niobe. The expression of the whole countenance was such as conveyed the idea of superior intellectual power; and there was a gentle, unobtrusive smile playing

round the corners of the lips, that indicated a modesty and benevolence truly feminine.

"You are very kind, Mr. Lascelles," she said, as she recognized my presence by a graceful inclination of the head, "to take the trouble of coming to inquire after my father's health. He is this morning much improved, and he desired me to express his thanks to you for your attentions yesterday.

I know not whence it is, but I have sometimes met with women with whom I felt at first sight as if I had been an old acquaintance. Of these, the lady before me was one. There was an affability and kindness in her manner that thawed at once the frost of ceremony, and she knew how to conduct conversation on indifferent topics, without the slightest appearance of reserve or stiffness. Such were her intelligence and the extent of her information, that the whole field of polite learning seemed patent to her. On the subject of the fine arts, in particular, she displayed a degree of taste and discrimination seldom to be met with in a mere amateur; and when I requested her to favour me with a specimen of her performance on the harp, she complied at once without the slightest coyness or affectation. In music, at least, her practical skill seemed equal to her theoretic knowledge; the tones she drew from the instrument were truly enchanting; and when she sung, her rich full voice harmonised most delightfully with the vibrations of the silver strings.

"You seem fond of music, Mr. Lascelles," she said, when she had finished her song. "Indeed, that is one of the privileges of your name. Pray, may I ask if you are related to the Lascelles of ——shire?"

"I am the son of the Mr. Lascelles to whom you allude, madam," I replied.

"I thought so," she continued; "Indeed, I may almost say I knew so before I asked the question; and more, your name must be Edward! Nay, do not look so astonished at my prophetic powers; the truth is, your sister was a schoolfellow of mine, and she possessed a miniature likeness of her sailor brother, so admirably executed that I should have known you to be the original at first sight."

At this moment a servant entered and spoke something to her aside.

“ I must bid you adieu for the present,” she said, rising up, “ as my father is in need of my attendance ; but I trust we shall have the pleasure of seeing you again before you leave town ;” and, making a graceful curtsy, she glided from the room.

I returned to my hotel in raptures. Of all the women I had ever seen, none, I thought, had half such powers of enchantment ; nor was it perhaps one of the smallest proofs of my being deeply smitten, that I said not a word of my morning’s visit to Strangways or Neville. When they inquired where I had been, I told them of the various relations on whom I found it necessary to wait, and so the affair passed off.

Next morning, however, as early as propriety would permit, I again presented myself at—— Square, and again found Catherine—for that, I ascertained, was her name—alone. Another hour spent in her delightful society only tended to rivet me more firmly as her devoted admirer.—The intelligence of her conversation, the variety of her accomplishments, and the amiability of her disposition, not to mention the unparalleled beauty of her countenance and the elegance of her person, all combined to confirm me in the opinion that she had not her equal in the world, and to render it more and more impossible for me to withdraw myself from the fascinations of her society. Day after day found me in her company, and day after day I became still more devotedly her slave.

It is true, that I sometimes ventured to inquire of myself to what all this ardour of attachment on my part could ultimately tend. She had never, by word or action, shown the slightest partiality for me, and seemed, more than any thing else, to suffer my visits for the sake of my sister and the services I had rendered her father ; and, even supposing that she might perhaps entertain sentiments which time might ripen into something like attachment, how was it possible for a poor penniless midshipman to make proposals to one who had evidently been brought up in all the elegancies and luxuries of life !—This was a humiliating consideration ; yet I tried to dispose of it by reflecting, that I had interest sufficient to raise me in the service, and if I could approach her in time, as a commander, perhaps she might be inclined to look upon

my suit with favourable eyes. A commander ! But when would that consummation arrive ? and was it possible to suppose that one so lovely would be allowed to wait so uncertain an event ? I glanced my eye in the mirror as I made this reflection, and was silly enough to fancy she might. She certainly did not dislike my society, and who could tell what time might effect !

During the fortnight I spent in London, I was a daily visiter at —— Square ; and as the old gentleman had, in the interval, a good deal recovered, he had been invariably present at my latter visits. He was a fine, frank, gentlemanlike man ; and being acquainted with my father, and apparently pleased with myself, he invariably received me with the utmost kindness, and pressed me to come and see him as often as I could. The reader may suppose how eagerly I accepted this invitation ; every evening found me in the society of Catherine, more charmed, more enchanted than ever.

At length the letters which I received from my father became so pressing for my immediate return home, that I found I could no longer, in duty, neglect them. Accordingly, I with some regret fixed the day of my departure ; and during the interval which I had still to spend in town, I determined to come to some understanding with Catherine. This, however, was a determination more easily made than executed. Although I was at all times treated by the object of my affections with the utmost frankness and cordiality, there was never anything in her demeanour approaching to tenderness, and I felt at a loss how to introduce a topic which seemed so unlikely to meet with a favourable reception. Night after night passed away ; and still, so far from any declaration on my part, I felt at each interview more and more at a loss how to act.

But time pressed. Only one day now intervened before that fixed for my departure, and I resolved to come, at last, to some explanation decisive of my fate. I had promised to spend an hour at —— Square in the evening, and I presented myself at the appointed time, fully prepared to press an *eclaircissement*.

The weather had for some days been cold and rainy, and when I entered the house, the servant informed me

that his master felt rather indisposed, and did not intend to leave his apartment. This, I thought, was so far favourable to my purposes, and I bounded up stairs to the room where we commonly met, with more agility than usual. There was no one there; but an argand-lamp burning on the table, and a couple of wax-lights at the piano, on which a music-book lay open, indicated that the room had been recently occupied. I concluded that Catherine would be with her father, and anticipating her immediate return, I sat down to the instrument to practise over one of the songs we had been in the habit of singing together.

I had not been long thus employed when Catherine entered, not alone, as I had expected, but leaning on the arm of a young man of remarkably handsome countenance and graceful exterior. He was dressed in a military uniform, which showed off his fine person to great advantage; and the tender glances with which he regarded his lovely companion went like daggers to my heart.

“Allow me, Mr. Lascelles,” said the lady, advancing towards me with her usual blandness of manner, “to present you to my husband, who is just arrived for a few days on leave of absence from his regiment. He is an acquaintance of your father and your uncle, and I am sure you will like each other.”

The young officer advanced and shook me cordially by the hand, saying that a recommendation from his wife was at all times the best introduction to him, and that he hoped to have an opportunity of improving our acquaintance.

CATHERINE’S HUSBAND! It was impossible, and yet the living man stood before me, and smiled on me as blandly as Catherine herself. I did not know what to say, or how to look; I was so much taken unawares, and it was no small relief to me when the young officer threw the conversation into another channel, and asked me if I had recently seen the colonel my uncle.

“No, sir,” I replied, “not since I was with him at St. Helena, three years ago.”

“Ah! at St. Helena!” said the officer, smiling; “I have heard of your visit there, and of your gallops on old Nestor, and your visits to Plantation House, and—but I had perhaps as well not go on with my list. You have

not of course seen your old acquaintance Sophia since your arrival? I spent some days lately in her company at her uncle's in Somersetshire, and she still speaks of her stay at St. Helena with pleasure."

Sophia! what recollections did that name recal, and at what a time! Never in my life was I more thoroughly embarrassed. I knew not what to say, and stammered out some question at random about when the officer had seen the colonel.

"He is commander of the regiment," he replied, "in which I have the honour to serve, and I parted from him only a couple of days since. But I see you are looking at the piano, Mr. Lascelles. Come, Catherine, pray favour us with that beautiful Indian air I use to admire so much."

Catherine seated herself at the instrument; and as her fingers ran over the notes, I discovered for the first time, lurking between two splendid brilliants, and almost completely hid by them, the small unobtrusive marriage-ring. Had I not looked for it on purpose, I certainly should not have discovered it even now.

When she had finished her song, she requested me to join her in one we had been in the habit of singing together. For this, however, I was totally unfit, and having pleaded the early hour in the morning at which I was to proceed on my journey, I took my leave and departed.

CHAPTER X.

JOINING THE FLAG-SHIP.

*Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti;
Tempus abire tibi.*

HORACE.

FORTUNATELY for me, the romance and sentiment of Werther and Ortis formed no part of my disposition. Had it been otherwise, what an opportunity now offered itself to me for ending my life in a fit of hopeless love! for

beautiful as are the ideal portraitures which the powerful pencils of Goëthe and Foscolo have transmitted of the heroines of their delightful tales, they were not, in my opinion, one half so beautiful as the living reality of Catherine —— ! The deep passion that lurked in her full dark eye, the delicate contour of her countenance, and the graceful symmetry of her elegantly moulded figure, formed a combination of attraction sufficient to entrance a youth of my naturally warm temperament ; and “ notwithstanding all my philosophy,” I could not, without a pang, resign myself to the idea of her being the wife of another.

It was, accordingly, with that peculiar yearning of the heart, which follows more or less the breaking off of any *liaison*, however transient, that I proceeded on my homeward journey. The beautiful country through which I passed, the thought of home and of friends, nay, even the offer of the reins which the accommodating driver made me, could not rouse me from my abstraction. My mind was entirely occupied with the idea of the accomplished Catherine ; busy memory conjuring up every word she had spoken that could be construed into a word of kindness, every look she had given which fancy could assimilate to a look of love.

It was already late in the evening when we arrived at the small town of ——, where I was under the necessity of remaining over night, the public conveyance not proceeding northward until an early hour in the morning. Unwilling, in my present mood of mind, to be harassed by the presence of strangers, I requested the landlord of the inn at which we stopped to accommodate me with a private apartment, where, throwing myself on a sofa, I gave myself up to a thousand uneasy reflections and vain regrets.

The parlour which I occupied was separated from the public, or, what is usually denominated the travellers' room, by no other partition than a pair of large folding-doors, through which the fumes of liquor and the hum of conversation reached me without interruption. At first the buzz and confusion that followed the arrival of the new guests, the reiterated applications to the bell, the bustling of waiters, the clashing of plates, the jingling of glasses, and the incessant hum of discordant voices, were

perfectly intolerable, and accorded ill with my present meditative mood; and it was no unpleasant prospect to me, when at length, as the night grew late, the repeated calls for "boots and chambermaid," indicated that the company were dispersing. In a short time the room was almost entirely vacated, and I began to flatter myself with the hope of enjoying a little quiet; but, alas! when the travellers' bell again sounded, instead of the anticipated demand for "chambermaid," the waiter was ordered to bring "*brandy and water for two!*"

Here was a dilemma! Those "*two*," whoever they were, were evidently bent on enjoying a comfortable night-cup together, which boded little rest to me. The liquor was brought, chairs were drawn, the fire was poked, and every thing prognosticated a regular "set-to." Placed as I was, I could not avoid becoming an involuntary eaves-dropper on the conversation that passed, and this, as usually happens between strangers at an English inn, turned upon sporting and the turf.

"Well, well," said one of the speakers, in the soft silvery accents of youth. "I don't know so much of Newmarket; Doncaster's the place for my money. What is your opinion, sir, of the last St. Leger?"

"Why, as to what is my opinion of the St. Leger, sir," replied the other, in a gruffer tone, "I can only say that I wish it had been at the devil. I'm not a man to be cozened by the legs, but that race cost me a cool hundred! Foul play, sir; foul play, upon my honour!"

"Ay, ay, you backed the favourite, I suppose; and no disparagement either—many of the knowing ones did the same. But, for my own part, I saw from the first that the favourite was not the likely horse. I backed Moonbeam, sir, and I shan't say what I made of it!"

"Well, sir," was the reply, "I'm not much given to argumentation, but this I'll say, notwithstanding, that Moonbeam is no more fit to run with that same favourite than my little terrier bitch is to beat his lordship's greyhound at a coursing match. No! no! honour and honesty are no longer to be found upon the turf! It is very different from what I can recollect it; gentlemen were gentlemen then!"

"You really suppose, then, that there was foul play?" inquired the other.

“Suppose ! I know it, and the owner of the losing horse, Mr. —, knew it too.”

“Take care what you say, sir ; Mr. — is a particular friend of mine, and I’ll have no reflections cast upon his honour.”

“I don’t care whose friend he is ; thank God he’s none of mine. All I say is, that his horse was drugged, and he knew it !”

This difference was the mere prelude to a regular quarrel, which the fumes of the brandy no doubt tended to augment. A challenge was given and accepted, and it was agreed that as one of the gentlemen had a travelling case of pistols, the affair should be settled on the spot. Whether the landlord had been alarmed by the altercation, or how he came to the knowledge of what was going on, I know not ; but presently he rushed into my room, and urged me, for God’s sake, to interfere, otherwise there would be bloodshed in the house.

“I never meddle with other men’s quarrels, my friend,” said I. “If the gentlemen shoot each other, it’s no business of mine.”

“But at least, sir,” cried the host, in extreme perturbation, “step in and see fair play. My house will be ruined if such an affair take place within its very walls, and no one to witness in my favour. It would be little better than murder !”

With some difficulty I was at last prevailed upon to witness the threatened rencontre, and for this purpose I was ushered into the travellers’ room, which is public to all comers.

The two combatants were the only individuals in the apartment, and they stood opposite each other, on either side of the small table at which they had been drinking. The one, an elegant-looking young man of about two and twenty, was very deliberately loading a pistol, and the other, a middle-aged, stout-built gentleman, in a military frock-coat, was witnessing the operation with the utmost coolness. As I entered, both turned round to see by whom they were interrupted, and no sooner did our eyes meet, than a simultaneous ejaculation of “Ned !” and “Mr. Lascelles !” burst from them both.

“Which of all the winds of heaven has blown you

here, Ned!" cried the younger of the two, throwing down the half-loaded pistol and running to embrace me.

"Mr. Lascelles, as I live!" cried the military senior; "well now but I'm devilish glad to see you;" and as he spoke, he grasped my hand in his herculean fist.

This was certainly a most unexpected rencontre. One of the angry duellists was an old schoolfellow of mine, Tom Halliday; and his antagonist was no other than honest Mr. Tunbridge, *çi-devant* aid-de-camp to Sir —— at St. Helena, whom the reader may perhaps recollect as having been my constant attendant during my rides and walks with Sophia.

I shook them both cordially by the hand, truly delighted to see them; and having called for an additional supply of liquor, we all sat down in friendship to talk over old stories. As to fighting, that was for the present never thought of; and though the pistols and ammunition lay all the while on the table, not the slightest allusion was made by my two friends to their recent quarrel. The wish not to disturb the harmony of so unexpected a meeting seemed to prevail; and after a few rounds of cognac punch, the utmost hilarity and good-fellowship were the order of the night.

"And how have you been, Mr. Lascelles, since you left St. Helena?" said Tunbridge. "Sad doings we had there shortly after you went away. You have of course heard of his death?"

"We called at St. Helena," I replied, "in coming home, and I visited his grave."

"Ay! that was just like yourself; and how is the yew-tree thriving? I planted it with my own hands."

"It was well done of you, Mr. Tunbridge," I replied.

"He was a great man; and when the grave closes even on an enemy, nothing but good should be remembered. Poor Napoleon!"

"D—n Napoleon!" cried Tunbridge, striking his huge fist on the table; "I don't mean him; it's Nestor that's dead! Napoleon, forsooth! Ay! ay! poor Nestor! he died of an inflammation, and that in spite of all our blistering and bleeding. But we are all mortal, Mr. Lascelles, though I certainly *did* hope that poor Nestor would have lived to have taken the shine out of some of the prime

ones in England. Poor Miss Sophia ! I thought it would have broken her heart ; for what with that and your going away, the poor thing did not hold up her head for a month, Your uncle, indeed, was not so down-mouthed about it as might have been expected, and bore his loss better. He's a cool man, is the general ! I remember he stood near me when I received that cursed ball in my knee, and he laughed as if he would have died, though the shot sent me down as if I had been killed in good earnest. He's a brave man, is the general ! And, by the way, talking of that," he continued, turning round to Halliday, "it may perhaps be as well to observe that you and I have all this time forgotten to fight !"

"Very true !" replied Halliday, with true Oxonian frankness ; "and, with your leave, I have no objections to postpone the affair altogether !"

"With all my heart," replied Tunbridge ; "it is equally the same to me. And, to say the truth, I begin to like you too well to care about shooting you, or even about being shot by you ; for though you do not belong to the service, like Mr. Lascelles here, and myself, yet you're a devilish good fellow, and there's my hand on't !"

It was late in the morning before our convivialities ended, and Tunbridge having agreed to accompany me for a few days to my father's, we left Tom Halliday, after many kind farewells, to pursue his journey to Oxford, and took the road northward.

Being advertised of my arrival, my father met us one stage from home, and we travelled the rest of the way in his chariot. It was a cold, dull, drizzling morning ; but, notwithstanding the ungeniality of the weather, no sooner did our vehicle draw up at the door, than down came my mother and sisters with loud shouts of welcome, to receive us.

It so happened that honest Tunbridge, muffled up in his military cloak, was the first to alight, and my mother, not expecting any stranger, received him in her arms, and imprinted a warm kiss on his somewhat rough visage. The astonished lieutenant started back in amazement at this cordial reception, and his military cap falling from his head at the moment, displayed him in all the perfections of his bald pate, and pox-seamed countenance.

"Merciful heavens!" cried my mother, quite horrified at so unexpected an apparition, "this can't be Edward!"

"No, mother," said I, stepping forward, and clasping her in my arms; "it is not Edward, but it is Edward's friend, and one fully as worthy of welcome as Edward himself."

I shall not detain the reader with a detail of all the happiness I experienced during my residence in my father's house. I now enjoyed the privilege which I had often envied others, namely, the privilege of being "a guest" at home, one whom everybody was bent on making happy and comfortable. The neighbours were visited; parties of pleasure were formed; riding, driving, hunting, fishing, during the day, dancing and music at night, left no heavy time on hand. Every one was kinder to me than another; and even after all my "stories" had been many times told, they were still called for, and listened to at least with patience; a proof certainly of no small indulgence and forbearance.

Indeed, the constant repetition of all the "Scenes" I had witnessed became at last irksome to myself, and I was often fain to "back out," when requested to enter on any particular narrative. This, however, was sometimes impossible, and I was frequently obliged to submit to my fate.

At the house of one of our neighbours in particular, at which I was a frequent guest, and the owner of which was, and is, a fine specimen of the good-hearted English gentleman, my own patience and that of the company was very often put to the test. Invariably, after dinner, as soon as the first glass of claret had circulated, our worthy entertainer would gather the bottles before him, and settling himself in his huge high-backed chair, call across the table to me—

"I say, Ned, hadn't you a Fire once on board the Hesperus? Tell us how it happened, will ye?"

At this question, which, during my frequent visits at the Hall, was repeated daily at the same time and in the same manner, the company generally put on a look of resignation, and I had no alternative but to launch at once into the narrative, endeavouring, in compassion to my hearers, to curtail it as much as possible. When I had

finished, our good host would once more set the bottles in circulation; and, in doing so, he invariably proposed the following toast:—

“ We’ll drink, if you please, to Captain Morley. He must be a regular honest fellow that; so fill a creaming bumper to his health! I say, Ned, do you think there’s any chance of my getting him down for a month or two to the Hall?”

And dare I here confess to my fair readers, should any such honour me with the perusal of these pages, that before I had been many weeks at home, the image of the beautiful Catherine had faded from my heart, and I already sunned myself in the blue eyes of a fair-haired girl, resident for the time in my father’s house. It was a feeling that stole insensibly upon me, for I was not at the time predisposed to be in love; but those who have seen Matilda, and who knew the accomplishments of her mind, the amiability of her disposition, and the unsophisticated gentleness of her manners, will not think the feeling strange. Constantly in her society, and with constant opportunities of admiring her many good qualities, I can only ask, in the words of the Scottish poet,

Oh! was I to blame to love her?

But there was too much of Elysium in the life which I now led, that it should be of long continuance; and six weeks had scarcely elapsed after my arrival at home, when I received an order to join the —— Frigate, for the purpose of joining the Flag-ship in the Mediterranean.

This was exactly what I had most earnestly desired. The Mediterranean, of all the seas in the world, is the most delightful to cruise in; and, as the admiral was an intimate friend of my father, there appeared every prospect of my having ample opportunity of visiting much of that classic ground, which was so intimately associated with my earliest ideas of beauty and grandeur.

Accordingly, after many kind farewells, and sighs, and tears, I once more tore myself from home, and arrived safely in London. Here it was no small addition to the pleasure I anticipated, when I learned that an expedition was expected to proceed forthwith to Algiers, to ensure the strict performance of the treaty which Lord Exmouth had

some time before, and in no very gentle manner, forced upon the Dey. It appeared that various infringements had from time to time been made on the terms of this treaty; that complaints from different quarters had, in consequence, reached the admiral, and that things had even gone so far that the British Consul had actually quitted the port. This was glorious news!

As the frigate in which I had obtained a passage was lying at Portsmouth, and was to sail without delay, I had but little time to spend in London; and, accordingly, the second morning after my arrival I mounted the box-seat of the Rocket, and under the guidance of that celebrated whip, Scarlett, I was safely deposited, towards evening, at the Fountain Inn.

As it was too late to wait that night upon the captain of the frigate, who had lodgings at Portsea, and as I wished, besides, to spend one more rational evening before descending to the horrors of a midshipman's berth, I made my toilet, and proceeded to deliver a letter which my farther had given me to the Governor of Portsmouth. By this excellent individual I was most kindly received, and, being invited to dinner, I spent the evening in a manner quite suited to my taste.

Early next morning I proceeded to Portsea, and soon found out the lodgings of my new captain.

Having made a somewhat bashful appeal to the knocker, the door was opened by a dirty slip-shod serving girl, whose unwashed face and slovenly appearance did not auger much for the cleanliness of the interior. After sending up my name as in duty bound—for no one can approach the captain of a man-of-war even on shore, without a due observance of ceremonial—I followed the fair *ancilla* up a narrow, dirty, carpetless flight of wooden stairs, and soon reached the entrance of the apartment which contained the object of my visit.

Everything without bore the appearance of untidiness and discomfort; but the scene within baffles all description. The floor was literally littered with all sorts of trumpery. Trunks, band-boxes, bonnets, boots, shawls, epaulettes, silk gowns, and swords, were strewn about in every direction, and in the most admirable confusion. At a small uncovered table, near the centre of the room,

on which stood a dirty half-broken breakfast service, sat an elegant-looking female, with long dark hair and piercing eyes, but characterised by that languid slothfulness of appearance and sallow tint of complexion which invariably distinguish the Portuguese women, when past the prime of life. She hung listlessly over a cup of tea and a large slice of buttered toast, seeming, from the noise and confusion, to be totally unconscious of what was passing around her.

Opposite one of the two small windows by which the apartment was lighted, sat a remarkably beautiful girl of about fifteen, evidently the daughter of her senior companion, with the same dark silken hair and fiery eyes, but with a complexion the almost transparent pureness of which evinced the intermixture of English blood. Her slender figure was wrapped up to the chin in what appeared to be an old packing-cloth, and the celebrated Portsmouth barber—with whom every sailor is acquainted—was engaged in dressing her hair, cutting as many capers round her with his comb and scissors as a midshipman over a dead marine. More alive than her mother, she seemed to keep a watchful eye on everything that was going forward, and a slight blush suffused her lovely countenance at being discovered by a stranger in so unseemly a position.

At a pier-glass, which occupied the space between the windows, with his back turned towards me as I entered, stood a tall thin man, in dirty red slippers, a pair of not much cleaner white trousers, and blue checked shirt. Of his face, which was lathered up to the eyes with a thick coating of soap-suds, nothing was visible save a pair of piercing grey eyes, and a most enormous aqualine nose. His right hand held aside this huge proboscis, and in his left he brandished a razor, with such a look of fierce determination, that it seemed doubtful whether he meant to shave or commit a *felo-de-se*. Near him stood a middle-sized stiff-built sailor, the coxswain, as I afterwards learned, of the frigate, who for the present enacted the part of valet of the toilette, and who was patiently waiting the termination of the shaving process, in order that he might pack up the apparatus in a half-filled trunk that stood at his side.

Not a little alarmed at the picture before me, and suffering under the agitation usually attendant on one's

first visit to a new captain, I made my bow as well as I could, and presently the hero of the razor—for it was no other the dreaded *He*—turned round, and, staring me full in the face, roared out, in the most discordant voice I almost ever heard—

“Well, sir, what the devil do you want here?”

“I have come, sir,” I replied, in a most respectful tone, “to join the —— Frigate as a supernumerary, for a passage to the Flag-ship in the Mediterranean.”

“Well sir,” roared the courteous captain, “and why the devil could’nt you go aboard at once, without coming to pester me with such d——d nonsense!”

“I have brought some letters of introduction for you, sir,” I replied in the same submissive tone; “and I thought it——”

“Then put them on the table, sir, and take yourself off! Letters of introduction forsooth! I’ve had enough of these matters, by G—d, already! It is not a week since two of your stamp, with their d——d letters of introduction, managed to stick me in for more than a hundred pounds! But tell the first lieutenant that I shall be on board presently, and I’ll make a clean ship of them before they are many hours older! Well, sir,” he continued, what the devil are you standing staring there for, when I told you to be off!”

Making a very blundering bow, I was glad of an opportunity to escape from so choleric a commander; and not deeming, from the specimen I had just received, that he was a person to be trifled with, I proceeded on board, with no further delay than what was occasioned by some cold beef and porter, at that snuggest of all snug inns, Mrs. Harrison’s on the Hard.

The frigate was lying at Spithead; and as I neared her I was satisfied, from her trim respectable appearance, that, whatever might be the eccentricities of the captain, there was at least *one* sailor on board. I was received by the first lieutenant, a very gentlemanlike, middle-aged man, who inspected my order to join, and welcomed me very graciously on board. I then delivered the captain’s message regarding the two midshipmen, who, it appeared, had justly incensed him by obtaining his indorsements to

bills for a considerable amount, which had been dishonoured.

"Yes, sir," said the lieutenant, "I have heard of that already, and heartily glad I shall be to get rid of this couple of rascals. I fear, sir, you will not find your berth the most comfortable at present; but as there are three of you supernumeraries, I shall hope for your assistance in working out a thorough reformation in that quarter; and if we get clear of those two scoundrels who have been leading my youngsters into every species of impropriety, I have no doubt a good deal may be done in the way of improvement. As to the others I have been too much occupied fitting out to pay them so much attention as I could have wished, and I warrant they have learned some bad tricks already; but when I get them once into blue water, I'll soon work the rust off them!"

To my great delight, one of the other supernumeraries was a passed midshipman of the *Hesperus*, also bound to join the Flag-ship, and the other appeared a very gentlemanly young man, about my own standing in the service. But as for the middies' berth, I cannot describe the disgust I experienced on my first introduction to it. Everything was filthy, confused, and slovenly; and the manners, the language, the whole bearing of the "young gentlemen," so low, so ungentlemanlike, so different from what I had been accustomed to on board the clean, well-regulated *Hesperus*, that my old shipmate and myself agreed, that unless we could effect some reform in the present disgraceful state of things, we should decline associating with such disagreeable messmates.

On the arrival of the captain on board, the two midshipmen who had obtained his indorsement in so unprincipled a manner, and who had been the main cause of the disorderly state in which we found the berth, were sent on shore, bag and baggage, and everything seemed now to favour our views of reformation. As soon as our intention to improve matters became generally known, several of our messmates joined our standard; and by a little care and attention, we so completely succeeded in our purpose, that on our arrival at Gibraltar few people could have recognized the berth or its inhabitants in their altered condition.

Things being better arranged in this department, our voyage became unspeakably more agreeable, although Captain —— was certainly one of the most eccentric men I ever met in command.

He could not, indeed, be said to be a martinet, for his humours were chiefly of a harmless and entertaining description; and he was withal so essentially good-natured, that he was rather liked on board than otherwise.

At Gibraltar we had but little time to spend, as we found orders waiting for us there to proceed without delay to join the fleet off Algiers, which port was already blockaded by our ships. Accordingly, our stay was as limited as possible, and we were soon running up the Mediterranean with a fine favourable breeze.

The weather, after leaving Gibraltar, was exceedingly hot, and in our confined berth so sultry, and oppressive, that we could neither eat nor sleep with comfort. It was accordingly voted one afternoon that, as there was every prospect of a continuance of settled weather, we might take upon ourselves to knock out our scuttle,* and thus admit a little fresh air.

It so happened, however, that shortly after this had been done, the captain came on the gangway, and immediately descrying the open scuttle, he turned round to the first lieutenant, and observed, in his usual caustic manner, screwing his mouth, and twisting his huge nose to one side of his face—

“Luxurious dogs, these midshipmen of mine, aren’t they—eh!”

“They must have felt it over hot in the berth, sir, I suppose,” replied the lieutenant, in a conciliatory tone.

“Hot, and be d——d to them!” cried the captain. “What business have they to feel heat or cold either! But I’ll remember them for this—see if I don’t!”

No, order, however, being issued to reclose the scuttle, and no farther notice being taken of the circumstance to any of us, we began to flatter ourselves that the affair would be allowed to pass.

During the whole of that day the weather continued very fine; but towards evening the breeze began to freshen considerably, and there was every indication of a com-

* A small window like a port-hole, in the midshipmen’s berth.

ing gale. To the astonishment of every one on board, the captain who was at all times careful, and who carried his caution during the night to the very verge of timidity, instead of taking any precautions to meet the gale, with which every one saw we were threatened, continued to hold on exactly as if no change at all in the weather had taken place. Gradually the breeze increased until it blew exceedingly strong; but still, although the spars had enough to do with it, considering the press of sail under which we were, no orders were issued for reefing.

“Hands by top-gallant sheets and halyards!” cried the first lieutenant.

“Ay, ay,” said one of our midshipmen; “look at the old boy how nobly he carries on! I always said he would carry sail when there was occasion. What a d—l of a hurry he’s in to get at those Algerines!”

It now blew a perfect gale, but still the captain paced about the deck without taking the slightest precaution for the safety of his ship, and looking as indifferent as if it had been the most moderate weather in the world.

“Hadn’t we better shorten sail, sir?” whispered the lieutenant in his ear.

“No! no!” cried the captain, with his usual half smile, or rather half grin. “Keep all fast! I’ll teach those midshipmen, by G—d, to open their scuttle! Carry on, Mr. —; carry on, I say, and give them a h—ll of a wetting!”

“It is blowing so hard, sir,” replied the lieutenant submissively, “that if we don’t shorten sail the breeze will presently save us the trouble.”

“D—n the breeze, sir!” roared the captain. “All I say is, CARRY ON!”

Scarcely had these words left his lips, when away with a crash went the fore-top-mast close by the cap, accompanied by the main-top-gallant-mast and gib-boom.

“By heaven!” exclaimed the captain, jumping off the gun-carriage on which he had been standing, as soon as he saw what had happened.

“By heaven, indeed!” echoed the first lieutenant. “This comes of wetting the midshipmen!”

“Very well, sir,” replied the captain, confronting the lieutenant with one of his withering grins; “and if I please to wet the midshipmen, who the d—l has a right

to interfere? Clear away the wreck, sir—clear away the wreck!”

Fortunately, in the course of a few hours, the breeze abated, and before the captain appeared next morning the wreck was cleared away, and we were once more all a-tanto; having had a very pleasant night's work of it, not to mention a berth swimming with water. So much for sailing with eccentrics!

After a tolerable passage, we at length made Algiers, where we found the admiral already blockading the port; and I was certainly by no means displeased to leave a ship where we had been for some time not only exceedingly uncomfortable in our own berth, but where our lives were apt to be put in jeopardy, merely to humour the captain's freak of wetting the midshipmen.

On joining the Flag-ship, an entirely new scene was opened to me. Hitherto I had been merely the slaving middy, exposed to many buffetings and privations; and although perhaps I enjoyed, from circumstances, more indulgence and kindness than usually fall to the lot of young men of the same rank, yet still I was in the shafts. The burden I had to draw was, perhaps, comparatively light; yet still I was there!

Seldom looked upon as any way superior to a mere servant; not supposed for an instant to possess an opinion of one's own, much less to express one; to do nothing but obey, even should the order be to run one's head against a wall, are the features that, on board most ships, characterise the life of a midshipman. But on board the Flag-ship matters were entirely different. Here every one seemed in some way to be connected with his neighbour; and kindness and consideration, from superiors to inferiors, were the order of the day. The reason of this may be stated in one word; the Flag-ship was officered by *gentlemen*; and where this is the case, there is little fear but every thing will go on pleasantly and well. This vessel, indeed, may be said to have been a perfect ark of aristocracy. She numbered, among her officers, young men of the first families in England; and while due and even punctilious consideration was invariably paid to rank, neither the admiral himself, nor any one beneath him, seemed ever, for an instant, to forget that those with whom he was for the time associated, were not only

gentlemen by birth, but had the feelings of gentlemen. Among the others, it was no small pleasure to me to find my old friend Neville duly installed. He had arrived on board some time previously; and our meeting was a cordial one on both sides.

One evil genius only there was amongst us; one black exception to the fine honourable spirit that characterised the rest of the officers. It is not my intention to sully these pages by even hinting at his name. He may rest undisturbed for me amid his vices and his insignificance; but let him not suppose, that although he is separated from his former shipmates, the scorn and contempt with which he was regarded by all will ever be obliterated from their minds. While he lives, he will be marked, scouted, and despised, as one combining all those base attributes so well associated in the lines of Mr. Canning,

Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
Spiritless outcast!

But let us turn to more pleasing subjects, nor dim the bright Mediterranean sky by the clouds which such recollections engender.*

CHAPTER XI.

OFF ALGIERS.

O God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing,
In any shape, in any mood.
I've seen it rushing forth in blood;
I've seen it in the breaking ocean,
Strive with a swollen, convulsive motion;
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of sin, delirious with its dread:—
But THIS!——

PRISONER OF CHILLON.

THE proceedings of our fleet, during the last expedition to Algiers, are long since matters of history. Upon these,

* Those who served in the Mediterranean at the time to which I allude, may not perhaps deem it over-valiant in me to indulge in the above reflections, as the individual alluded to is one, who, like O'Connell, "*won't fight!*" My only object in doing so is to apply a little gentle chastisement where it is so justly merited.

therefore, I do not mean at present to enter ; and indeed if such were my purpose, I could do little more than repeat what has already appeared before the public, in shapes more authentic than any my rambling narrative can pretend to.

The event was one of too much importance to be overlooked by the indefatigable "chroniclers of the day," whose business it is to be ever on the alert for the interesting and the attractive ; and accordingly, in the numerous "Memoirs," "Residences," "Journals," and so forth, which have from time to time appeared, every detail of the blockade, from the exploits of "*Fighting Bob*," (whom I beg, in passing, to accept of my best remembrances), to the colour of the Dey's slipper, has been carefully recorded.

In a political point of view, too, the subject has already been sufficiently handled. Government has had its share both of censure and applause ; and though, like the humorist in the comedy, "I have my own ideas o' the matter," I shall not pause to state them, but proceed, without farther remark, to what more immediately concerned myself and my shipmates.

Although the season of the year at which we commenced operation was exceedingly unfavourable for blockading a port like Algiers, yet the arrangements of the admiral were made with so much sagacity and foresight, and such was the vigilant activity of the various commanders, that among the numerous attempts made to break the blockade, there was not a single instance of success. During the day, indeed, when our ships were cruising in shore, and in constant communication with each other, it was impossible for any vessel to elude our vigilance. It was during the night, when the squadron had taken an offing of from twelve to fourteen miles, that the attempt was usually made ; and as darkness and distance were then equally against us, it required all our activity to prevent the blockade being broken.

On board the Flag-ship I performed the duty of signal-midshipman. This post was certainly no sinecure, as I had to be constantly on the watch to observe and report signals from whatever quarter they were made, and the slightest inattention on my part would justly have called forth the severest reprehension. While on duty, there-

fore, the glass, either by night or day, was seldom out of my hand. I was all anxiety to acquit myself at least creditably of the task allotted to me ; and as it was impossible to tell from what quarter, or at what particular time, any signal might be made, the utmost vigilance on my part was requisite.

One morning we were lying becalmed at no great distance from the shore, and as it chanced to be my watch as signal-midshipman, I was, of course, at my post. But the brightest eye, aided by the best Dolland, would have availed me nothing on the present occasion. A heavy fog hung in one unbroken mass over the surface of the water—dense, white, motionless, impenetrable. Not a breath of air stirred ; the vapour clung, as it were, to the ocean, veiling all around in the most utter obscurity.

At length, as the sun advanced, its influence became apparent. Slowly the vapoury veil arose, like the curtain of a theatre, which the skilful manager causes to be slowly lifted, in order to display with the greater effect his scenic illusions, and by degrees the face of the water became visible. The first object I descried was a vessel, the hull of which only was revealed, lying at about a cable's length a-head. Gradually as the cloud of fog ascended, the lower parts of her rigging were exposed, and in a few minutes her top spars emerged from the mist, leaving her entirely open to observation. She was a low, rakish-looking craft, and from the cut of her canvass I had no difficulty in recognising her to be a French schooner. She had apparently been attempting to beat in within the Mole with the land breeze ; but this having failed her, she was left in her present position.

For some time all of us had entertained very strong suspicions that the Dey, if he were not actually assisted by the French, was, at all events, countenanced by them, and encouraged to make as obstinate a resistance as possible. The admiral was therefore particularly anxious to cut off all communication between the shore and vessels belonging to the government of France ; and, accordingly, as soon as the necessary reports had been made, one of our midshipmen was sent in a boat to board the schooner in question. In little more time, however, than was requisite to row the distance that divided the two vessels, and to return, our envoy again appeared on board.

“ Well, Mr. —,” said the captain, when the midshipman had reported himself, “ you have certainly been very expeditious. What does the Frenchman say ? ”

“ I don’t know what he says, sir,” replied the midshipman, somewhat abashed ; “ I can’t get a single word of English out of him.”

“ He speaks French only then ? ” demanded the captain.

“ Yes, sir ; but he articulates so rapidly that I cannot make out a word he says ! ”

“ Pshaw ! ” said the admiral, who came up at the moment ; “ why did you not send some one who understands French ? ”

“ I believe, sir,” replied the captain, “ that this youngster is the only one in the watch who is at all acquainted with the language.”

At this juncture one of the officers happened to hint that I could speak French fluently ; and having myself acknowledged an acquaintance with the language, I was immediately despatched on board the schooner.

Being arrived on board, I found her commander on the quarter-deck. For the rank he held, he might be termed a *very* young man, as he did not appear much to exceed twenty. His dress was arranged with an exactness almost approaching to foppery ; his fingers adorned with rings, and his fine light-coloured silken hair brushed and braided with the most scrupulous care. He certainly more resembled the elegant frequenter of a Parisian soirée than the commander of a vessel of war ; and it required but a single glance at his open, inexperienced-looking countenance, with his delicate untarnished complexion, to discover that he had not seen much service.

After the usual salutations, I came at once to the point, and told him, in the best way I could, that I was ordered to bring him on board the admiral with his despatches. At this intimation the Frenchman stared, and announced to me with some warmth, that I must be well aware that it was as much as his place was worth to part with his despatches. To this I replied that it was no business of mine, and that I could only repeat my orders.

“ And *I*,” said he, turning round on his heel, and throwing as much ferocity as he could into the mild expression

of his fine drawing-room countenance—"I can only say that I won't obey them!"

"That, sir," I replied calmly, "is your affair. Shall I then report to the admiral that you refuse to obey his summons?"

"Certainly, sir!" said the officer. "I shall neither leave my vessel nor part with my papers under such circumstances; after which decided reply, I immediately took my leave; the young Frenchman very politely bowing me over the side.

"I fear, sir," I said, as I was leaving the gangway, "you will be detained here until the blockade is over; an event which will not probably occur for some time."

"Indeed!" said the Frenchman; "do you think this likely, sir?"

"There is not the slightest doubt of it," I replied. "The admiral is not a man to be trifled with or turned out of his course, when he has made up his mind how to steer! Sir, I have the honour to wish you a good morning. Bear a hand there!"

"Stop, sir!" cried the Frenchman, in no small alarm, when he saw me about to descend into the boat. "If I thought the admiral wished merely to examine the papers, and that I would be allowed to——"

"I make no conditions for the admiral, sir," I replied. "My orders are to bring you and your papers on board; if you think proper to go, I am now ready to accompany you."

The unfortunate young commander knitted his brows, and folding his arms on his breast, paced about the deck for some time in a state of no very pleasant embarrassment. At length, without uttering a word, he descended to the cabin, and presently returning with his papers, he made me a very stiff bow, merely saying, in the coldest possible manner—"Monsieur je suis prêt!"

As soon as we reached the Flag-ship, my companion was received on the quarter-deck by the admiral, to whom he delivered his papers, observing that he was not aware that Algiers was in a state of blockade.

"As such, however," he continued, "I now find to be the case, I shall certainly return immediately to Marseilles with my despatches."

“When you are beyond the limits of the blockade, sir,” replied the admiral, “you may return where you please; but as for your despatches, they must remain with me. Here, Mr. Lascelles; take these papers to the office, and desire my clerk to lock them carefully up, and send me a receipt for them.”

It was in vain that the Frenchman represented the hardship of his case, and the disgrace that would attend him should he return to Marseilles without his papers; the admiral was inexorable.

“All this, sir,” said he, “you should have thought of before you came here. As it is, I have only to say, that when the blockade is at an end, your despatches shall be landed; in the meantime they must remain with me. You are now at liberty, sir, to return to your vessel, which I give you half-an-hour to carry out beyond our line.”

“Mais, Monsieur, ——” remonstrated the unlucky Frenchman.

“I have nothing more to say, sir,” interrupted the admiral, pulling out his watch; “excepting that you had better make what use you can of the time I have allotted you!”

Finding all remonstrance fruitless, the captain was at last obliged to depart, and within the given time his schooner was seen standing out to sea. The poor fellow, I believe, was afterwards broke for allowing himself to be cajoled out of his papers.

The blockade having now continued for some time, we were daily expecting the arrival from England of the squadron destined to bombard the town. The prospect of the approaching bombardment, indeed, occupied all our thoughts; and as we anticipated nothing less than certain victory, not to mention promotion and loads of prize-money, the thoughts of this enabled us to endure with patience the monotony of our present duty.

One day, shortly before the arrival of the squadron, our blockading party had run in and anchored out of gun-shot of the batteries. A small cutter, which served as a tender to the Flag-ship, and which had lately joined us with despatches from Marseilles, was at the time under weigh, waiting to receive fresh instructions previous to her departure for Malta. As soon as these were prepared, a signal was made for the officer commanding her to come

on board the Flag-ship ; a summons which he lost no time in obeying.

The cutter, in the meanwhile, which was thus left under the charge of a young midshipman, the only other officer on board, made a stretch in shore. The breeze being exceedingly light at the time, I watched her progress with some anxiety, as I could not help thinking she was continuing in this course too far. She, however, still held on in the same direction for some time longer, and when she at last tacked to stretch off again, she found herself, as I had anticipated, baffled by a head groundswell, which threw the wind completely out of her sails. What little breeze there was entirely failing her, she was, after an ineffectual struggle, compelled to anchor where she was.

Ten minutes had scarcely elapsed, after she had taken up this position, when a line of gun-boats, to the number of about twenty-three, were observed to issue from behind the Mole, and make for our unfortunate tender, apparently with the intention of cutting her off. Not a moment was to be lost. The ships of the blockading squadron were immediately ordered to get springs upon their cables, to be ready to cover her ; and a number of boats were manned and armed, in order that we might be prepared to meet the enemy hand to hand, should this be found requisite as a last resource.

The gun-boats in the meantime advanced, each having a red flag flying at her bows, which served as an excellent mark for our gunners ; and operations were forthwith commenced in such good earnest, that in a few minutes two of the boats were sunk. This was a signal for the batteries to retaliate, and they presently answered us with a very heavy fire ; although, from the distance that intervened, their gun-shots were of little avail, and their shells invariably burst harmlessly in the air.

The scene was beautiful. Not a cloud obscured the deep azure of the sky ; the air was motionless and sultry. A canopy of white smoke hung over the town ; thin and undefined along the line of the batteries, but rolling in dense masses over the tops of the houses that stood higher up the hill. The cannon in the embrasures vomited forth their fire ; while high over our heads, the tiny wreaths

of white smoke left behind by the exploded shells, had a peculiarly striking effect.

The cutter, in the meantime, was not idle. Indeed, she had the main brunt of the battle to bear; for the gun-boats, perceiving the advantage their flags afforded us as a mark, had caused them to be lowered; and having now nothing to direct our aim but the flash of their guns, we could, consequently, do them little damage.

The midshipman in command of the cutter was a perfect boy, not more than thirteen or fourteen years of age, but he bore himself gallantly. The complement of men on board his little craft did not exceed eight, and she carried only four guns. These, in order that he might use them with more effect, he had got all over to one side, and he continued to answer the fire of the gun-boats with a rapidity quite surprising, when the smallness of his crew is considered.

But it was impossible that he could hold out long against such a host of assailants, and we were preparing to send off the boats to his assistance, when the breeze fortunately sprung up, and with no small satisfaction we saw him weigh his anchor. His sails presently filled, and we expected to see him bear up with all the speed he could from his dangerous situation. Such a course, however, though completely in his power, did not suit the temper of the gallant little commander. Instead of putting his helm up, and making the most of his way to a place of greater security, he stood right along the line of the boats, blazing away at them in most gallant style. Shot followed shot as rapidly as the small complement of his men and guns would permit, to the no small astonishment of the gun-boats; and when he had in this manner run down the whole of their long line, he bore up and ran quietly out, having sustained no farther damage than a hole or two in his jib and mainsail.

For so young a boy, the conduct of little Gl—n—le on this occasion was, to say the least, extremely intrepid. He is now, I believe, a commander; and I trust he will excuse an old shipmate for recording this instance of his early prowess, which has, as far as I am aware, escaped the vigilance of the Panantis of the day.

At length the bombarding squadron arrived, and we

were all in the highest spirits, with the anticipation of a little active service. In this however, we were doomed to be disappointed; for scarcely had the squadron taken up its position, when the Dey, apparently not much liking the appearance of so formidable an armament, and retaining too, perhaps, some unpleasant recollections of Lord Exmouth and the Queen Charlotte, gave notice, by a flag of truce, that he was ready to listen to terms. An interview was accordingly arranged between the admiral and his Algerine Highness, which was to take place at the palace of the latter.

As this was a mission of great importance, and promised to be not a little gratifying to the curiosity of those engaged in it, much interest was used with the admiral for the honour of forming part of his suite. For a poor youngster, like myself, however, there was no chance of such preferment; and I considered myself extremely fortunate in being appointed to take charge of the barge which was to convey the party on shore.

Accordingly, on the morning of the day appointed for the interview, we left the ship in great state; and having arrived safely within the Mole, the admiral and his suite were landed, and I caused the barge to lie off on her oars to await their return.

While in this situation the scene around us was certainly unique. We lay near the centre of an immense basin, as it were, of blue rippling water. On one side was the town, rising in amphitheatric beauty before us, the flat roofs of its houses, as they mounted one above another on the slope of the hill, having exactly the appearance of some immense cyclopiian staircase; on another side stretched the long line of the Mole batteries; on the third was the Mole itself, of whose gigantic dimensions the reader may form some idea, when he is reminded that thirty thousand Christian slaves were employed for three years in its construction; and through the fourth and last side, the only one in which there was any opening, a perspective glimpse was afforded of the sea, and the distant receding hills on the coast of Barbary.

Here, then, I was, in the very centre of the place, which Tasso has designated the

Nido di ladri infame ed empio;

and the prospect awakening all the romantic associations of Algerine history, I was soon back in imagination among the daring days of Haydin, Barbarossa, and Doria.

I was reclining under the awning in the stern-sheets, sometimes indulging in these reminiscences, sometimes cursing the heat, which was intolerable, and sometimes sighing for a cigar, when we were unexpectedly hailed from the shore. I immediately gave orders to pull for the quay, where I found a negro slave, rather neatly dressed in the Turkish fashion, awaiting our approach. Having no idea what his business could be, but supposing that he might probably be the bearer of some message from the admiral, I made signs for him to descend into the barge, which he had no sooner done than, after a most ungraceful salaam, that he informed me in wretched mongrel Italian, that he had been sent by his master, who begged I would join him in a pipe and cup of coffee.

And who or where is your master?" I replied, in the same language, which I spoke with nearly the same degree of purity as my sable companion.

"El Senor!" replied Blackie, making a pair of huge eyes at my ignorance in not knowing his master by instinct.

"El Senor!—Eccolo!" he continued, pointing up to the portico of a house which stood near the quay, and where I discovered a dusky-complexioned personage sitting smoking a long Turkish pipe. "Eccolo! El Ammiraglio del Porto, si!"

"Aha!" I replied; "The Admiral of the Port! Say to your master that I accept his invitation, and shall join him presently;" and off bolted Blackie, evidently quite pleased at having executed his mission with so much address.

Having given strict injunctions to the crew not to leave the barge, and to wait at the quay till my return, I ascended to the Portico in question, where I found the Admiral of the Port squatted on a square bit of carpet, a cup of coffee by his side, and a long amber-tipped pipe in his mouth.

He was a thick-set, dapper-looking fellow, apparently about the middle age; and the expression of his countenance, as far as it could be ascertained through his enormous mustache and grizzled beard, was certainly any thing but prepossessing. It seemed to convey at once a

most unamiable mixture of conceit, cunning, cruelty, and cold-bloodedness ; and indeed there was a certain undefinable scowl about his eye, which of itself seemed to indicate all these. He was dressed in a light-coloured frock of figured chintz, and a sky-blue embroidered waistcoat ; a pair of loose Turkish-shaped white trousers and yellow slippers defended his lower extremities, and a skull-cap, with a top-knot or tassel of blue silk, adorned his head.

He received me with the usual salutation, accompanied by a slight inclination of the body ; and without either rising or removing the pipe from his mouth, he requested me to seat myself on a bit of carpet which was spread on purpose at his side. A cup of coffee, and long cherry-stick filled with choice tobacco, were speedily supplied by the negro slave ; and in a few minutes I found myself sitting cross-legged, in regular Turkish fashion, and giving puff for puff with the great Admiral of the Port of Algiers.

To afford any thing like an adequate idea of the conversation that passed between us would be impossible. The admiral himself was the chief collocutor, his principal topic being his own wonderful exploits by sea and land ; and so marvellous were many of the narratives with which he favoured me, that had they been true, he must have been a perfect Alexander for sagacity and prowess.

As it was, however, I had no difficulty in setting him down as one of the most egregious braggadocios I had ever met ; and I amused myself with playing with him at his own game, and trumping as it were his best tricks. The language in which he endeavoured to make himself understood was not the least ludicrous part of the entertainment. It consisted of a hideous jumble of bad French, and worse Italian, interlarded here and there with a word or two meant for English, and copiously seasoned all over with Turkish or Arabic. I shall never forget his ridiculous appearance, when, getting animated in the description of some of his valorous deeds, he brandished his long pipe in the air, his eyes sparkling and his face flushed, and floundered away in his narrative through a maze of languages, not one of which he could be said to understand.

At length, having smoked and listened till my patience was fairly exhausted, I pulled out my watch as a sort of

prelude to taking leave. It chanced that on my watch-ribbon I had a small brass runner, which was made in the form of a snake, and which I had purchased at Portsmouth for a shilling. This elegant ornament having attracted the notice of the Admiral of the Port, he begged to be allowed to inspect it more closely ; and as he seemed to admire it exceedingly, I thought I could not do better than present it to him, which I accordingly did in as handsome a manner as I could.

Such a flattering mark of attention on my part seemed to gratify him exceedingly ; and having spoken something in Turkish, our black attendant disappeared into the house, and presently returned with a large-sized bottle of ottar of roses. This the worthy admiral urged me to accept, as a compensation for my valuable present ; and it will readily be supposed that this was a sort of traffic into which I had no objection to enter.

Indeed, as the liberality of mine host seemed to indicate that exchanges were to be the order of the day, I was willing to carry them a little farther, and I began to contemplate the possibility of bartering my regulation sword for the admiral's Turkish sabre. This sabre, which appeared to be of great value, had attracted my attention from the very first ; and on a closer examination I found it to be a "right Damascus," the hilt ornamented with precious stones, and the crimson velvet scabbard richly inlaid and worked with gold. The difference between the worth of this and my own miserable regulation spit was certainly considerable ; but I thought that the man who could give a bottle of ottar of roses for what was little better than an old brass button, could not have any very perspicuous ideas on the subject of relative value.

I accordingly opened the affair, by stating that it was customary in England to exchange swords as a mark of friendship, and that, though I set considerable esteem on mine, which was of great value, yet I could not think of neglecting to pay this national compliment to a man who had shown me so much kindness.

"Therefore, signor," I continued, in my mongrel French-Italian, "I beg to present you with my sword, and I shall be glad to have the honour of wearing yours in return ;" and having in the meantime unfastened the

buckle, I took my sword by the point, and handed it over to him with much formality.

Here, however, I reckoned without my host; for it appeared that the wily admiral knew the value of a Damascus blade as well as I did. He accordingly screwed his face into a most ungainly look of regret, and told me he was sorry he could not exchange swords, as his was a present from the Dey, who would certainly have his head taken off should he presume to part with it.

“I am sorry for this, on your account,” I replied, “as you will lose the opportunity of possessing one of the best swords that ever graced a sailor’s side. Look ye now, signor! Pray unsheath that thing of yours; and only compare the shapes of the two weapons. Why, yours is quite useless for fighting, and with mine I could easily defend myself against a dozen such. You seem incredulous, signor! Pray stand up, and I shall explain what I mean. There, signor! Now, suppose this pillar of your portico a man armed with a sword such as yours. I would go at him thus!”—and forthwith I commenced lunging carte and tierce at the pillar with all the grace and agility of an Angelo, springing from one side of the portico to the other, in order to display to the utmost effect the advantages of my weapon.

The scene was so extremely ludicrous, that, having commenced it in frolic, I could not resist continuing it for the enjoyment of the joke. Round and round the portico I skipped, thrusting at everything that came in my way; mine host, notwithstanding all his valour, evidently in no small trepidation, taking care to keep always opposite to me, with his eye fixed on mine, and his sword raised to the position of “prepare to guard?” while the terrified black slave, who doubtless thought I had gone mad, jumped aside with a loud squeak at every successive lunge I made.

I was in this situation, my face flushed with exercise, my cocked-hat lying on the ground, and my naked sword performing all sorts of ludicrous girations round the head of my host, who was now reduced to a state of extreme terror, when who should appear at the entrance of the portico but *our own* admiral, who chanced to be passing at the time on his return from the palace.

I shall never forget his look of amazement at thus catching me engaged, as he supposed, in single combat with a man of such importance as the Admiral of the Port. In an instant my sword was in its sheath; and the cordial manner in which I shook hands with my entertainer seemed in some measure to relieve the admiral's anxiety. However, he spoke not a word; so, snatching up my hat, I saluted him respectfully, and rushing down to the quay, was soon standing ready to receive my freight, in every sense of the phrase, "as stiff as a midshipman."

As soon as we were outside the Mole, I explained the whole circumstance to the admiral, who, after reprimanding me for quitting the barge, could not help joining the rest of the party in a hearty laugh at the expense of his namesake of the Port.

The Dey having, with no very good grace, acceded to the terms proposed by the admiral, our blockading duty at last ceased, and it was not long till we sailed for Malta, leaving, when we left Algiers, all our fondly-cherished hopes of promotion, fame, and prize-money. During our passage to Malta we touched at Tunis; and though our stay there occupied only six-and-thirty hours, an event occurred which, even at this distance of time, I cannot look back upon without feelings almost approaching to horror.

We lay at anchor in the bay of Tunis. It was a lovely evening even for that lovely clime. A gentle aromatic breeze blew from the shore; the sun, which had considerably declined towards the west, cast a hue of bright purple over the beautifully-outlined hills along the coast of Barbary; and the smooth mirrory surface of the sea reflected, in a subdued tint, the intensely deep blue of the firmament.

The day had been scorchingly hot; and to breathe the cool evening wind, and gaze upon the gently rippled waters, was unspeakably refreshing. I have seldom seen the sea more irresistibly tempting. Its tiny waves, sparkling in the oblique rays of the declining sun, broke round the sides of the ship, so gentle, so cool, so inviting, that I almost fancied I could interpret their melodious murmurings into the words of Goëthe's Naiad—

Lures thee the nether-heaven not,
The wave-illuminated blue;
Lures thee thy shadow'd image not,
Down 'mid eternal dew ?

It was, in one word, exactly the sort of evening that is usually chosen on board ship for allowing the crew to bathe ; and accordingly all hands were turned up for this purpose. It was a busy scene. Eager to immerse themselves in the tempting element, the men were speedily stripped ; and when the drum beat the appropriate signal there was one simultaneous plunge into the water. Here the gambols usual on such occasions were carried on with a hearty goodwill. The fresh coolness of the water having braced up the nerves which the mid-day heat had relaxed, all were in the highest spirits ; swimming and diving matches were going on in every direction, and bets were nearly as rife as at Ascot or Newmarket.

In these aquatic exercises one man, a marine named Wilson, bore away the palm from all the rest. He was a remarkably fine-looking, athletic young fellow ; and it was quite a treat to see the masterly manner in which he “breasted the billows,” leaving all competitors behind. Indeed, it almost seemed as if “the world of waters were his home ;” and with his broad open chest, herculean proportions, and fine expressive countenance, he wanted but a trident in his hand to have formed a complete personification of a youthful god of the ocean.

In order to prevent accidents, it was customary in the Flag-ship, as I believe it is in most others, to regulate the time during which the crew shall remain in the water by the beat of drum. When the hands are turned up to bathe, no one is allowed to plunge overboard until the drum has beat ; and when the second roll is heard, it is a signal for all to return on board.

Accordingly, on the present occasion, as soon as the second roll was sounded, the sports were broken off, and every one made for the ship. I was among the first to arrive ; and I was sitting on the gun-room stern-port, just preparing to resume my clothes, when I observed a man, who had been farther out than the rest, making all speed to gain the ship. There was no mistaking his lusty strokes and peculiar mode of swimming ; it was Wilson, the marine.

He might be still about a hundred yards a-stern of the ship, swimming strong and rapidly, when suddenly I observed him throw himself half out of the water, sink again, and commence to struggle violently. I did not wait to consider the probable cause of these movements in one who was so noted for his aquatic skill. Before the cry, "*A man drowning!*" was out of the mouth of the signalman who was stationed at the poop, I was again overboard; and the boat sent to pick him up had scarcely left the ship's side when I had arrived within a few strokes of the spot where he lay.

The poor fellow still continued to struggle convulsively; his head thrown backwards, and his countenance considerably distorted. In my anxiety to save him, instead of keeping off, as I ought in prudence to have done, and catching him by the arm, I swam straight up to him. In an instant I was in his grasp. Before I could take any measures to save myself, his brawny arms were twined round my body, and my breast was pressed against his, with such supernatural strength, as almost to deprive me of the power of respiration. To move in the slightest degree was impossible; I could not even find breath to call for assistance, and the water washed incessantly over my mouth in such a manner as almost to choke me.

Every one must have experienced, when suffering extreme pain, that a certain degree of relief is obtained by grasping firmly in the hands or arms any object, no matter what. An opportunity of bracing up the nerves and muscles to their extreme tension is thus afforded; and though, indeed, the pain itself is not alleviated, the power of endurance is increased. And thus I suppose it was with the unfortunate marine. While he held me in his muscular embrace, he ceased to struggle as he had previously done, and the features of his face became, in some degree, less distorted, though they still wore the expression of extreme anguish. Almost the only motion he made was an occasional convulsive start; after one of which he would continue to press me still more firmly than before; and I could distinctly feel, against my naked bosom, the throbbing of his heart—now strong and rapid—now languid and intermitting.

The boat, which had put off to our assistance, was now rapidly approaching; two pulls of the oars would have brought it to our side. The poor fellow clasped me to his breast more closely than ever; he seemed to be in an agony of pain; his eyes-started in their sockets, and the blue veins swelled upon his forehead. It was but for an instant. With a suddenness which I can compare to nothing but the snapping of an overstretched bow-string, his herculean gripe in an instant relaxed; I felt his heart give one dreadful, indescribable, convulsive quiver against my breast, and he sunk back among the water.

That quiver of the heart! I shall never forget it!—I knew not then, and I know not now, the many intricate movements of the human mechanism—those convulsed pulsations, and trembling ebbings of the blood—which are said to betoken dissolution; but no sooner did I feel that dreadful quiver than I KNEW that it was death!

“He is dead!” I exclaimed, when I was lifted into the boat in a state of complete exhaustion.

“Impossible!” said the officer in charge. “He has not been *three minutes* in the water, and you held him up manfully, my brave fellow!”

“It may be, sir,” I replied; “*but he is dead!*”

“Nonsense!” said the officer; “it is merely exhaustion, and we shall bring him round presently. What reason have you to suppose him dead?”

“Sir, I FELT HIM DIE!”

As I anticipated, it proved on examination that the poor fellow had died in a fit. All attempts to resuscitate him were fruitless; and as we consigned his body to the deep, he somewhat unusual expression was on the lips of many—“*He FELT him die!*” Often and often, since then, when any thing has occurred to trouble my sleep, I have fancied myself in the gripe of the dead marine, and have awakened in an agony, as I felt the dreadful quiver of his heart.

We sailed the next evening with the land breeze for Malta; hoping that “the little military hot-house,” as Lord Byron calls it, would afford us some recreation to make up for the monotonous duties for the last four months. After a pleasant trip, we accordingly made this

far-famed island; but we had no opportunity of judging of its appearance from the sea, as it was towards sunset before we reached Gozzo, and quite dark when we ran into the harbour. In this, however, we were perhaps fortunate, as the harbour of Malta, at night, presents one of the most striking scenes I almost ever witnessed.

On either side of the harbour the ground rises high, and is covered with houses, from which, and from the streets, innumerable lights are seen, shining brightly in the surrounding gloom, and reflected from the surface of the water beneath. As the night on which we made our entrance chanced to be more than usually dark, nothing but these lights was visible. The houses, the ramparts, the quays, the water of the harbour itself, all were hid in the most impenetrable obscurity; and the lights appearing to hang, like so many clusters of the stars in middle air, produced a very extraordinary, nay almost magical effect. Add to this the incessant chiming of bells, with which our ears were saluted from every corner of the town—for the season had been long dry, and the honest Maltese were ringing night and day for rain—together with the monotonous indistinct hum which is always heard in the neighbourhood of populous cities, and some idea, though an imperfect one, may be formed of the harbour of Malta by night.

The only scene I ever saw at all resembling it, is in the metropolis of Scotland; a city which seems to combine, within itself, the most striking beauties of many of the celebrated towns in Europe. Here, if the spectator, in a very dark night, take up his station between the Old and the New Towns, in what is called, I believe, the North Loch,* he may witness an effect very similar to that which I have attempted to describe as existing at Malta; with this difference, that at Edinburgh the ground does not rise so high as at Malta, and the lights of La Valette have the appearance of hanging more immediately over the head of the spectator, than those of the New, or even of the Old Town, of the Scottish metropolis.

* I am informed that, since I visited Scotland, this *North Loch* has been converted into a beautiful garden.

While we were running up towards our anchorage, there was something so extremely puzzling in the number and variety of lights by which we were surrounded, that it was in vain we endeavoured to form any idea of the extraordinary place into which we had got. Nay, even those of our messmates who had before visited Malta, could not bring themselves to agree about the different localities; one maintaining that such and such a light was that of the Nix Mangiare Stairs; another, that it was that of the Harbour Master; and a third, that it was that near the tomb of Old Balls.

When we got to our station, finding that it was just nine o'clock, the admiral gave orders to fire the evening gun; and so noiselessly had we made our approach, that this was the first intimation the ships in the harbour had of our arrival.

Scarcely had the report of our gun rung through the city, when we were visited by a boat, which came on purpose to inquire who had the insolence to interfere with the commanding officer's privilege.* When the officer in charge, however, was informed that he was on board the Admiral, it may be supposed he did not proceed with his interrogatories.

After all was made snug for the night, we retired to our hammocks, determined to take advantage of the first blush of morning to gratify ourselves with a peep at the far-famed Malta.

CHAPTER XII.

MALTA.

*Tripoli appar sul lido; e incontra a questa,
Giace Malta fra l'onde occulta e bassa.*

TASSO.

THE tract of ocean that separates Malta from Algiers, may be traversed in a very brief period of time; but,

* The senior officer in port always fires the morning and evening guns.

morally and politically considered, how immeasurable is the space which has from the earliest ages divided them !

In the annals of the world there is not a blacker page than that which relates to Algiers. Her history is one continued scene of iniquity and horror ; pointing her out as the chosen seat of barbarism and infidelity, the infamous nest of robbers and pirates, the stronghold of crime, cruelty, and corruption. Atrocities the most enormous and inhuman have ever found in her a genial soil ; her very heroes, whose valour has been so much extolled, have been actuated more by the fiendish spirit of demons than by the dauntless intrepidity of brave men. To the cause of Infidelity alone has she been faithful, and even that she has maintained by treachery the most perfidious !

How different a picture is presented in the romantic story of Malta ! Love of liberty and zeal for religion have ever been her distinguishing characteristics ; and the unyielding bravery with which she has maintained and defended both, has spread her fame all over the world. The chivalrous valour, the munificent benevolence, the unobtrusive piety and Christian zeal of the Knights of St. John, have ever been the admiration of surrounding nations. In many of the gallant men who have graced that illustrious order, may be found exemplified all those attractive attributes with which imagination is wont to invest the heroes of fiction—humility, forbearance, valour, virtue, and sagacity, all combined. To them, indeed, a deep debt of gratitude is due by the nations of Christendom, for having stood so long the firm bulwark of our Faith ; resisting, with a fortitude and perseverance which have never been surpassed, the overwhelming inroads of the Infidel ; and one of the many crimes for which the abettors of the French Revolution have yet to answer, is the subversion of the noble Order of the Knights of St. John.

The morning that succeeded the night of our arrival was already far advanced when I ascended on deck. The bay of Malta, with its blue rippled waters and indented beach, and the town, with its tall minarets and lofty fortifications, lay in all their beauty before me. It was, indeed, a lovely scene, and one which imagination might well delight to people with the heroes of former days. I was

now on the very spot which I had long been accustomed to consider as the native home of romance, and which was consecrated in my recollection by the many glorious deeds of which it had been the scene. Memory carried me back to the days of its former splendour ; to the time when seven hundred valiant Knights sustained victoriously, the protracted siege of the whole host of Solyman, headed by the invincible Mustapha—invincible everywhere but here !

Beyond the point of Ricasoli, I could see the road-stead where the Turk drew up his huge squadron of a hundred and thirty sail, and summoned the little band of Knights to surrender. Before me lay the fort of St. Elmo ; and I almost fancied I could see the noble La Valette standing on the cavalier of its battlement, and shooting back his defiance on the bolt of his cross-bow. Then came the thundering cannonade, and the fatal breach in the battlements, and the pass defended by one hundred Knights against eight thousand Turkish assailants. Immediately above me lay the Citta Vittoriosa and the fort of Il Borgo, which on that memorable occasion was defended by the Grand Master in person. It was not till the last of the gallant band of heroes had fallen at his post that the Turkish standard was planted on St. Elmo, and the tide of war swept down upon the Borgo, and the floating batteries of the Infidel were stationed on the very spot where our ship now lay.

The whole scene was vividly pictured in my imagination. I could even fancy I saw the very spots where the numerous breaches were made in the walls ; where host after host of the assailants rushed to the assault, and where host after host were repulsed, by the valiant defenders of Christianity. Then came the retreat sounded by the formidable Mustapha, after the loss of thirty thousand men, and the shout of triumph from the towers of the Borgo, and the procession of the few remaining Knights, wounded and bleeding, and soiled with the conflict, to the church of St. John ; where the venerable La Valette offered up thanks to the God of the Christian for having thus enabled them, with so small a force, to withstand for four months the whole array of Solyman's legions !

Such were the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem ; Religion, at once the cause for which they fought, and the source of their enthusiastic valour.*

But the days of the glory and the splendour of Malta are gone by. The sacrilegious hand of the revolutionary French, whose devastations have extended so widely over Europe, has not been idle here. The noble monuments, the splendid sarcophagi, the rich tombs which decorated the churches, and which the hand of gratitude had reared to the memory of departed heroes, have been mutilated and overthrown. The magnificent paintings of Caravaggio which represent the triumphs of the Order, and which were so long the pride of Malta, now decorate the walls of the Museum at Paris. The cathedral, the university, every place that contained anything valuable for its material, admirable for its workmanship, or curious for its antiquity, has been plundered and laid waste. Even the Monte de Pieta, that glorious monument of the munificence of the Order, where upwards of fifteen hundred patients, of all countries and religions, were constantly entertained at the expense of the Knights, has not been respected. The silver utensils, in which the food and medicines of the sick were served, could not escape the French ; all were carried off, and the institution itself subverted. Had La Valette, or L'Isle Adam, or the invincible Vignacourt existed, these things, perhaps, had not been !

But it is in vain to dwell on glories that are gone, and that can now never be recalled. Malta, under the more benign government of Great Britain, has already somewhat recovered from the cruel blow she received from France. The great increase of British residents, and the constant intermixture of officers of the British army and navy, has given a new tone to the manners and customs of the place, and rendered society there truly delightful.

* The memorable siege of Malta, by Mustapha, the renowned general of the great Solyman, is one of the most spirit-stirring events which history has recorded. It seems to me to be more fraught with romantic incident than even that of Saragossa, so beautifully described by Mr. Southey, and it would afford a fitting subject for the graphic pen of Bulwer or James, or the classic author of Valerius.

Never on any station have I enjoyed myself more than at Malta. The admiral resided constantly on shore ; and as we midshipmen attended him everywhere by turns, in the capacity of sorts of *aides-de-camp*, it may be supposed we spent a very pleasant time. Parties of pleasure, dinners, balls, filled up our day, and left no spare time for ennui. On Thursdays the admiral always entertained a large party at his own house ; and, on these occasions, we midshipmen were persons of no small importance. Our duty was to act as a sort of *maitres-de-ceremonie* ; one taking charge of the band, another of the quadrilles, and so forth.

When not engaged in this pleasant sort of duty with the admiral, or otherwise employed on board, my time was chiefly spent with the officers of the various regiments stationed in the town, among whom were two near relations of my own, and many friends of my father. To these gentlemen I can never sufficiently express my sense of the kindness I experienced ; a kindness not confined to me, but extended to every naval officer in the port. I shall not specify any particular corps ; they were all kind ; and should any of them chance to peruse these pages, he may rest assured that in saying this I do not express the opinion of an individual, but the known sentiments of every naval man on the station.

Indeed, it cannot be doubted that the military at Malta, by their invariable frankness, hospitality, and gentleman-like conduct, have done much to obliterate the foolish prejudice with which our army and navy were wont to regard each other ; a prejudice which I candidly confess, existed chiefly on our side. Long may the two services unite in harmony together ; for whenever they do so, the work with which they are both mutually entrusted will be more pleasantly, as well as more effectually discharged. Not that I would have either of them forget the pride which it becomes each to take in his own peculiar profession. On the contrary, in this matter I am rather inclined to agree with the boatswain of the Flag-ship, who was rather given to philosophy, and was, withal, a most ardent despiser of the military.

“ Yes, my lads,” he would say, after haranguing his messmates on the superiority of the naval service, “ if the

soldiers have their corps spree (*esprit de corps*, I presume) why the d—l shouldn't we have our ship spree!"

This, however, can never interfere with the mutual feelings of kindness and respect with which it becomes the two services to regard each other. Each has given to an admiring world sufficiently signal proofs of gallantry and patriotism; each has carried off its share of glory, and no room is left for unworthy jealousy or petty rivalry on either side. Happily a deep-rooted prejudice, like that of our jolly boatswain, is now rarely to be found even before the mast. In him, however, it had grown with his growth, and he could never be brought to speak well of the army.

I recollect a ludicrous ebullition of this feeling on his part, which occurred one day at Malta. He was standing on the gangway to pipe the side for a party of officers of the eighty—regiment, who were coming on board. One of them, who was well known in the mess-room at the time by the familiar appellation of "*Bob*,"* was a remarkably fine-looking young man, with a very strong, athletic person. The party rowed their own boat; and Bob, who had the stroke-oar, displayed so much skill and dexterity in using it, that he attracted the attention even of the nautical boatswain. When their visit was concluded, and they had once more left the ship, the bluff old seaman turned round to his messmate, the gunner, and squirting out his chew with considerable energy, exclaimed—

"What a pity that fellow's a soldier! D—n him! there's *one* good sailor spoiled any how!"

As we visited Malta merely for the purpose of refitting, our stay on the present occasion was necessarily short; and as soon as our repairs were completed, we once more set sail, and bent our course for Naples.

It was evening when we entered the Straits of Messina; and as the land began to close in on either side, nothing can be conceived more exquisitely beautiful than the scene by which we were surrounded. On the one hand lay the lovely city of Messina, amid its groves of olive

* Every one at Malta at the time knew "*Bob*." God bless him!

and myrtle ; its splendid Palazatta curving along the edge of the bay, and its magnificent mountains, among which the smoking summit of *Ætna* was chiefly prominent, receding far into the distance. On the other hand stretched the romantic coast of Calabria, with the white-walled Reggio in the foreground, a range of undulating vine-clad hills in the middle distance, and the majestic Appenines towering up in irregular and picturesque beauty behind. In front of us, the rock of Scylla arose from the sea in gigantic magnitude, and opposite to it was the point of Faro, the ancient Charybdis.

When we passed the Straits the weather was calm, and saving the current which sets in with great violence, and the breakers occasioned by the rude collision of the tides, we had nothing to remind us of the dreadful tempests to which this place is said to be liable. The great proximity of the two coasts, however, the hidden rocks beneath the water, and the beetling crags above, sufficiently showed how difficult it must be to weather a storm here ; and had the fragile ships of *Æneas* escaped the fate which befel them, it would have been little less than a miracle.

As I gazed upon the lovely scene around me, it was impossible not to contrast its present state of peaceful security, with what it must have been when visited by the awful earthquake of 1783, which shook the land on either side ; engulfing nearly the whole of Reggio, leaving the beautiful Messina in ruins, agitating the waters of the Straits till the waves rose and sunk like contending mountains, and committing such dreadful ravages among the population, that the coast on either side was said to be strewn with the mangled carcasses of the dead and the dying. It was on this occasion that the Knights of St. John, at the time, if I recollect aright, under the grand mastership of Emmanuel de Rohan, gave to the world an admirable proof of the disinterested philanthropy and munificence of their Order.

It was late on a winter's evening when news reached Malta of this dreadful earthquake, and of the desolate and miserable state of the inhabitants, left wounded and lacerated by the sudden overthrow of their dwellings, to endure the inclemency of the season, without a helping hand

to heal their bruises, or to afford them the shelter of which they stood so much in need. The galleys of the Order were at that time laid up in ordinary for the winter; the weather was tempestuous, and to brave the dangers of the Straits at such a season was peculiarly perilous. But no selfish considerations weighed with the generous De Rohan, who instantly issued orders to prepare the galleys for sea. With enthusiastic alacrity, knights, slaves, and soldiers, proceeded to the work; the preparations were carried on during the night with wonderful rapidity; and next day a chosen band set sail for Sicily, having on board their little squadron provisions, medicine-chests, tents, beds, surgeons, every thing, in a word, which could be required for their charitable purpose.

Meanwhile the Sicillians and the Calabrians continued in a most deplorable situation. Shock succeeded shock after brief but awful intervals, each bringing new calamities, and inspiring fresh terror. The face of the country was entirely changed; and it is said that the Neapolitan couriers were surprised to find plains where mountains had formerly been, and raging torrents where they were accustomed to meet tiny rivulets. Many of the wretched inhabitants were buried under the ruins of their houses; and such of them as had escaped, were seen dragging their wounded bodies to some place of supposed security, or dying in the streets. And amid all this distress, there was no one to assist or alleviate their sufferings; all were too much occupied in providing for their personal safety, to think of what befel their neighbours.

The squadron of the Knights at last reached the Straits, and the standard of St. John was seen floating in the Bay of Messina. This was the first signal of relief to the wretched sufferers. With pious and eager zeal the Knights flew to their assistance. A large wooden barrack was constructed, and fitted up as a hospital, with beds and all other conveniences. Here the wounded people were brought, their bruises dressed, and their various wants attended to, with all the care that medical skill could afford, or that the feelings of humanity could prompt. Parties of the Knights, accompanied by surgeons, were employed in searching among the ruins, and

in rescuing from destruction numbers of unhappy human beings, whose wounds rendered them incapable of assisting themselves.

These noble-minded men, the strong of hand and the unyielding in war, spared themselves no pains or labour in executing this work of Christian charity. Hundreds, who must otherwise inevitably have perished, were thus rescued from destruction; and thousands, who had lost their all in the overwhelming ruin, and had not even food to give their famished children, daily received provisions on the quay, distributed by the hands of the Knights themselves.

For three weeks did they continue on those desolated shores; and during all this time they intermitted not their charitable labours night nor day. No expense was spared; even the most delicate luxuries were provided for such of the sick as required these stimulants; and numbers who had no dwellings to shelter them were lodged in tents erected for the purpose. And what was the reward which was to crown all their exertions, and to compensate them for the personal privations they endured while their liberal hands dispensed comfort and plenty to the unfortunate? None they expected; none they sought. For them the consciousness of having discharged the duty which their Order imposed on them as Hospitallers was sufficient; and richly did they hold themselves recompensed in the satisfaction with which every generous bosom glows when it has done a generous action. Shall we be considered illiberal if we curse the wretched policy which drove those noble-minded men from the place of their supremacy!

We had scarcely cleared the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis when darkness set in, and the burning mountain of Stromboli appeared before us in all its beauty and magnificence. A bright pillar of fire ascended from its summit, casting a lurid light on the surrounding atmosphere, and rendering visible the outlines of the mountain towards the top, while beneath all was lost in obscurity. Masses of red-hot stone shot up into the air, or were projected forward and precipitated into the sea; while, at intervals of a few minutes, heaps of smaller debris were vomited up, and hurled, burning hot, down the steep declivity of the mountain, like mighty rivers of molten gold. It was

a beautiful picture ! Unlike most other volcanic mountains, the fires of Stromboli are in a state of constant activity ; and as its altitude renders it visible at night from a great distance, it has long been distinguished by the name of the Great Mediterranean Lighthouse.

Onward we stood ; and as the breeze was favourable, it was not long till we cleared the island of Capri, and entered the Bay of Naples.

The scene which here presented itself I shall not attempt to describe ; it is a subject to which my untutored pen is totally unequal. But if the reader's imagination can assist him in forming an idea of an immense semicircular bay, of upwards of twenty miles in diameter, surrounded by a coast which presents a succession of the most lovely landscapes, rich with the luxuriance of luxuriant Italy, and sprinkled all over with towns and villas and palaces, till the whole terminates at either extremity in the beautiful promontories of Miseno and Sorrento ; and if, upon the acclivity of a sloping hill on the margin of this lovely bay, he can suppose the city of Naples, with its suburbs stretching far along the beach, its quays and ramparts projecting into the water, and tier after tier of houses and palaces rising in the form of a splendid amphitheatre, till the whole is crowned by the surmounting turrets of the Castle of St. Elmo ; to this let him add the far-famed Vesuvius, with wreaths of smoke issuing from its summit, and the blue outline of the picturesque Appenines stretching away in the extreme back-ground, with a sea-view bounded by the beautiful islands of Capri, Ischia, and Procida ; and let him imagine the whole invested in that lovely ethereal hue which an Italian atmosphere imparts to its landscapes, and he may perhaps be enabled to form some inadequate idea of what the Bay of Naples is when seen from a vessel traversing its bosom.

He, however, who wishes to obtain a correct impression of its unequalled loveliness, has no alternative but to go there and view it in person. From the most graphic descriptions of the pen, and the most glowing delineations of the pencil, no idea can be formed that does not fall infinitely short of the reality.

CHAPTER XIII.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

Nil ego prætulerim jucundo sanus amico.

HORACE.

HAVING moored the old craft securely, we now began to look forward to at least five or six weeks' real enjoyment. Some of our officers, who had visited Naples before, made up a party to go to Rome, and invited me to accompany them; but as I was in no hurry for the antique, and as I anticipated, besides, much pleasure in the society of Naples, especially when introduced to the circle of which the admiral had the *entrée*, I preferred remaining where I was.

It was, of course, my first business to make the grand tour of the museum, the churches, and the palaces, and to bestow my meed of praise and admiration on all the wonders they contain. As I do not, however, mean to encroach on the province of Signor Ferrari and the guide-books, the reader's imagination must supply the place of a detailed description of pictures, and statues, and antiques, and pillars, and porticos, all of which abound here in no ordinary degree, and will afford entertainment to the *cognoscenti* for a twelvemonth at least. My investigations were conducted with a strict regard to economy of time; and as I did not think I had performed any great feat in "getting over" a score of churches, not to mention palaces by the dozen, in the course of a forenoon, it was not long till I had completed the round, and felt myself at liberty to look after other amusements.

I had brought with me a letter of introduction to a French gentleman who resided at a villa about two miles from Naples; but as I have seldom found such credentials productive of any other advantage than that of a little ceremonious attention, I did not take the trouble of delivering it in person, but contented myself with sending it by a special

messenger to its destination. Of course, I never expected that any farther notice would be taken of it, and I was therefore a good deal surprised when next day I received a polite note from the Frenchman, inviting me to dine at his villa, and stating that his carriage would be at the landing-place at five o'clock to carry me out.

At first I thought of declining this honour, as I anticipated nothing but a stiff ceremonious "feed;" however, after considering the circumstances, particularly the promptitude of the invitation, and the attention of the carriage, I thought it right to go.

Accordingly, at the appointed hour I repaired to the landing-place, where I found an elegant English equipage, the horses harnessed in tandem, and a servant, dressed in the regular English costume, waiting my arrival. A genuine Dandy Dinmont terrier and a thorough-bred milk-white bull-dog attended at the wheels; and as I was marvelling to find so complete an English equipage in Italy, the servant touched his hat, and increased my surprise by addressing me in the broadest Yorkshire.

"Master says he's sent tandem for ee; and if ee keant droive, whoy I'll do it for ee!"

"Thank you, my fine fellow," I replied, jumping up into the vehicle, and assuming the reins; "but if my neck is to be broken, I prefer breaking it myself!"

Our road lay through the suburbs; and as we pranced along my companion entertained me with an account of his horses, his master, and his dogs. Of the latter, the bull-terrier was the finest specimen of the kind I had almost ever seen; his broad chest, strong limbs, and delicately tapered tail, were sufficient to charm the eye of a connoisseur. With regard to his master, and the taste he displayed in his English equipage, the servant satisfied me with this sage remark—

"Whoy, sir, ee see measter served his time in England; and you wouldn't know him from an Englishman, sir, if he wasn't a Frenchman. But mind your eye there, sir!" he continued, as, intent on listening to his account of my new acquaintance, I was on the point of capsizing a fire apparatus where an old woman was roasting chestnuts. With a little dexterous management, however, I succeeded

in clearing the obstacle, much to the delight of the Yorkshireman, in whose good graces I evidently began to rank very highly.

A neat avenue of beautiful accacias brought us in front of the Villa —, the residence of Monsieur, which, like most other Italian villas, consisted of a plain façade, flat roof, and handsome portico. In the interior, the arrangement and elegance of the furniture evinced the taste of the occupants. The room into which I was ushered was a spacious saloon, with the roof tastefully painted in fresco, and the walls hung round with excellent pictures, chiefly the works of the ancient masters. The floor, save in the centre, where it was covered with a rich Persia carpet, was beautifully inlaid in a tessellated form with wood of different colours, and polished bright as a mirror; the windows were hung with airy gauze draperies; and their tall casements, turning upon hinges, opened into a beautiful flower garden, from which the breeze came loaded with the most delicious fragrance, and cooled by the waters of an elegant fountain which played into a marble basin.

I was received with the utmost politeness by an elegant-looking young man; who, in the most fluent and correct English, welcomed me to Italy, and presented me to two very handsome young women his sisters, and to his father, a nice-looking old gentleman of the French school of last century.

These were the only persons present; and I had not been long in their company till I congratulated myself on having made their acquaintance. The manners of the young man, the master of the tandem, and the individual to whom my letter was addressed, as well as of his sisters, were so completely modelled upon those of England, that, like the Yorkshire groom, if they had not been French, I should certainly have taken them for English. All that warmth of feeling, frankness, friendliness, and native good breeding, which are said to distinguish the gentry of our own isle, were theirs; and the openness of their manners formed a delightful contrast to the Parisian elegance, punctilious etiquette, and unaffected *légèreté* of the father. In conversation, I did not know which to admire the most;

so much good sense, justness of sentiment, and variety of information were displayed by all.

I was always fond of French society, I mean public society; but I certainly never expected to find all the amiable traits, which I had been accustomed to admire in my countrymen, exemplified in their domestic circles. Yet so it was here. The kindness displayed between the brother and the sisters; the polite attentions which they mutually exchanged, and the respect, mingled with affection, with which each regarded the father, showed how happy a home was theirs, and gave the lie to the calumny which would charge the French people with heartlessness.

In compliment I suppose to me, the conversation was conducted entirely in English, which the younger members of the family spoke with an idiom and accent quite vernacular; and even the French style, and the aristocratic *burr* of the old gentleman, did not impede his fluency. When I expressed my surprise at the knowledge which the young man and his sisters displayed of the localities and customs of England, I was given to understand by the former, that they had received their education there; that it was the home of their early youth, and that everything English was particularly dear to them.

The two sisters were so completely alike in face and form, that, being dressed exactly in the same manner, I had at first some difficulty in distinguishing the one from the other. The elder was named Annette, the younger Pauline; both were brunettes, both had large dark sparkling eyes, thick clustering ringlets, and an expression of countenance at once lively and intelligent. Nay, the very tones of their voices were the same; and the manners of each, down to the minutest particular, seemed an exact counterpart of those of the other. A close observer, however, might detect a peculiarly pensive expression about the eye-lids and lips of Annette, which could not be traced in the countenance of her sister. Not that she was less lively; on the contrary, the two seemed to vie with each other in animation; yet still, from whatever cause produced, the thoughtful expression of Annette was there, and might be traced even in her smile.

I have seldom spent a more pleasant evening than I did with this amiable family; and I determined to prosecute their acquaintance as much as possible, during my stay at Naples. For this, opportunities promised not to be wanting. Conversation naturally turned on the different places of interest in the neighbourhood, and I expressed my determination to visit as many of them as I could.

"You have much before you," said Rodolphe. "Herculaneum, Pompeii, Vesuvius, Posilipo, Baiæ, Castel-à-mare, Pæstum——"

"And the Museums!" said Annette.

"And the Churches!" said her sister.

"And the Palaces!" continued he brother.

"Nay," said the old gentleman, "do not puzzle our friend with so unmerciful a list. Were I as young and active as you, I would propose to myself the honour of being his companion in some of his excursions; but these limbs are now too old for climbing mountains, and scrambling among ruins. You, Annette, and you, Pauline, know every stone and tree all round the Bay, from Miseno to Sorrento; Rodolphe, too, is skilled in classic lore, and I think you might be of some service as guides to our young acquaintance. What say you, girls? It is not so long since you both climbed up the steep sides of Vesuvius."

"If Mr. Lascelles will accept of our guidance," said Annette, "we shall be happy to accompany him on some of his excursions, and to point out all the curiosities with which we are acquainted."

"And I, too," said Rodolphe, "shall be happy to make one of a party which promises to be so pleasant."

I thanked them all for this gratuitous mark of kindness, in the best manner I could; and next day being fixed for a visit to Vesuvius, I took leave of my new friends, quite delighted with the reception I had met.

CHAPTER XIV.

VESUVIUS.

Wohl furchtbar wird des Feuers Macht,
Wenn sie der Fessel sich entrafft,
Einhertritt auf der eignen Spur,
Die freie Tochter der Natur!

LIED VON DER GLOCKE.

A SHORT drive in a caleche brought me next morning to Resina, where my friends had agreed to meet me, and where mules are kept for the accommodation of travellers wishing to ascend the mountain. I found them true to their appointment, waiting for me at the hotel; and, as it was yet early in the day, and we did not wish to be on the summit of Vesuvius till towards sunset, it was agreed that we should pass the intervening time in visiting Herculaneum, over the ruins of which Resina and Portici are built.

A descent through a damp and dreary vault, but dimly lighted up the flambeaux of our guides, brought us among the corridors of the celebrated amphitheatre of Herculaneum, of which it was impossible not to admire the massiveness and solidity of the structure—capable, indeed, of resisting the influence of time, though not of the overwhelming fire-streams of Vesuvius. But to form any adequate idea of this splendid building, as a whole, was impossible; the partial light of our torches not discovering any more than a very limited space at one time. Still it was interesting to wander through a place which had once contained the great and the gay; which had rung with the applause of admiring multitudes, and whose stupendous pile had for sixteen centuries lain buried underground. Had I visited it blindfold, still I would have felt an interest in being *there*.

I had lingered behind, endeavouring to measure the height of one of the piers of the corridor, when my com-

panions unexpectedly disappeared with the torches through an adjoining opening. I followed on the instant; but though, from the sound of their voices, I knew they could not be far distant, I was so puzzled by the darkness and the intricacy of the path, that some time elapsed before I could overtake them. When at last I did come in view of them, they had mounted on the proscenium of the immense theatre, among whose mazes I had just been wandering; and the appearance they presented was so striking, that I paused for a moment to observe it.

The guides, having retired behind a projecting angle of the wall, were hid from my view, and the stream of light from their torches falling full upon the figures of my three companions, and partially illuminating the broken architrave and other ruined fragments scattered around, produced an effect which, when combined with the attitudes of the principal figures, might be termed truly scenic. Rodolphe was engaged in animated conversation, explaining to his sisters the antiquities of the place; Annette was listening in the stately attitude of a tragic queen; and the lively Pauline was engaged in tossing pebbles into the dark area beneath. The whole group, the light that streamed full upon them, though I could not distinguish from whence it came, the dark and desert appearance of the place, and the obscurity of my own position, reminded me forcibly of some of the night-scenes in the castle of Udolpho. Any one visiting Herculaneum would do well to make the experiment; he will find the effect peculiarly imposing.

My absence was so short that it was not observed by my companions, and I joined their group, just as Rodolphe was winding up his observations by the remark—in my opinion a very just one—that a much better idea of the place may be obtained by inspecting the model in the Museo Borbonico at Naples, than by encountering the dark and dampness of these subterranean recesses.

Having examined everything remarkable about the theatre, we continued our wanderings for some time longer; not because they afforded us any particular pleasure, but merely because the guides led the way; and the guides led the way merely because it was a part of their

routine. Indeed, it was no small relief to the whole party when we at last emerged from these dismal vaults, and breathed once more the free air of heaven. On reaching Resina we found everything prepared for our ascending the mountain.

On its seaward side, Vesuvius begins to rise almost from the margin of the Bay ; at first, with an acclivity so gentle, as scarcely to be perceptible, and then more steeply, till at last the ascent becomes extremely precipitous and abrupt. On the slope of its base, and near the sea, are situated the towns of Resina and Portici, built on the superincumbent strata of lava, beneath which Herculaneum has lain buried for so many centuries. Towards its top, the mountain is cleft as it were in twain, and presents two distinct summits to the spectator. One of these, which is that from which the eruptions emanate, and which is strictly termed Vesuvius, is in shape a regular cone, and in appearance bare and rugged, without the slightest trace of vegetation. The other is named the Monte Somma ; and towards the neighbouring cone this eminence presents a concave front, tall, barren, and precipitous ; while its northern side is covered far up with verdure, and vines, and fruit-trees, and slopes gradually away, till it merges at last in the rich and lovely plain of Campo Felice.

The first part of our excursion after leaving Resina, was extremely delightful ; the ascent being easy, and our path lying through those rich vineyards celebrated for the production of the famous *Lachrymæ Christi*. Mulberries, and figs, and fruit trees of every description, grew in profusion on either side ; the graceful vine interlacing its green shoots among their stems and branches, or hanging in airy festoons from their topmost boughs. The music of birds, the fragrance of the odoriferous shrubs, the lively voices of the labourers at work in the vineyards, and the gay conversation of my companions, all combined to raise my spirits to an unwonted pitch, and we pushed on at a pace which I believe was anything but agreeable to our guides.

But in a moment, and almost before we had left behind us the shadow of the last tree, a totally different scene

was presented to our view. Instead of the smiling and pleasant prospect of green trees and fragrant shrubs, nothing now met the eye but an arid desert, covered with ashes and burned stones, and huge cindery-looking blocks of lava. Not the smallest sign of vegetation appeared; not even the meanest lichen seemed capable of drawing nourishment from this desert collection of fire-dried debris. Several continuous unbroken streams of lava, the remains of the eruptions of the last fifty years, were seen, in different directions, adhering, in a congealed state, to the side of the hill; while here and there large tabular rock-like masses were discovered—the fragments, probably, of some anterior stream, which had been driven from their beds by the force of that which followed.

Through this dreary and arid waste we plodded on till we began the steep ascent of the Monte Cantaroni; a detached eminence, probably the creation of some early eruption, which rises to nearly two thirds the height of the main mountain, but is completely separated from it by the intervention of a dark valley, known by the name of the Fossa di Faraonte. Upon the top of this eminence, at the height, it is said, about two thousand feet above the level of the sea, stands the hermitage of St. Salvador, the residence of a brotherhood of pious monks, who have chosen this as the place of their abode; thus braving as it were the fury of the fiery mountain almost at its very mouth. Near as they are to the scene of danger, however, and exposed as the situation of their dwelling may appear, the monks of St. Salvador run no risk from the streams of lava which overwhelm the neighbouring country. The intervening valley of Faraonte intercepts the flowing mass, turning it off in a different direction; and there is thus less danger to be apprehended in the apparently precarious hermitage, than in Resini or Portici, or even Naples itself. In former times the chapel of this sanctuary, which has long occupied its present site, was dedicated to Januarius, the tutelar saint of Naples, who is supposed to have saved the city from many a past eruption, and whose statue may be seen standing on the bridge of the Magdalen, with one hand extended towards the mountain, as if commanding it to respect the place of his guardianship.

After a short colloquy with the monks, who treated us with a flask of the wine of Monte Somma, for which of course we left an equivalent in money, we descended the other side of the Cantaroni, and reached the wide vale beneath, which separates the exalted site of the hermitage from the rest of the mountain.

Here the scene was absolutely appalling. The whole plain, which is of considerable extent, was covered with black masses of burned stone, and layers of ashes, and huge fragments of disrupted lava; all so parched, so arid, so sterile, that no living thing seemed capable of existing among them. In other mountain deserts which I have visited there was always something grand, often something sublime; for we experience a mysteriously pleasurable feeling in gazing upon towering rocks and beetling crags; and there is seldom wanting some shrub or tree shooting from the stony clefts, or some patches of mossy verdure adhering to the summits of the precipices, which serve to show that even there the living principle of nature is not totally extinct. But here there was nothing majestic, nothing grand; all was dead, sterile, dreary, without one single redeeming object to rouse the admiration, or inspire the awe of the spectator. There is nothing more dignified to which I can compare this desert place, than to the rakings out of some immense cyclopean furnace; of which a very appropriate idea, in miniature, may be formed by those who have visited the fire-yards of some of the great English glass-works.

From this sterile plain, a short ascent brought us to the foot of the cone, at the top of which is the crater. Up this we found it necessary to ascend on foot, ankle-deep in ashes and cinders; and it was an undertaking of no small labour to our ladies, every step taken being accompanied by a retrograde movement, caused by the sliding of the loose debris through which we waded. For my own part, however, I never thought of the fatigue; being fully occupied in assisting the steps of the pretty Annette, whose lungs were never so much affected as to prevent her continuing her train of lively conversation.

We had bent our faces so assiduously to our work, that we never once turned round till we reached the summit.

Indeed, my companion laboured on so perseveringly at my side that I had no apology for doing so ; and it was not till we had reached nearly the highest point of all, that she stopped suddenly, and called playfully out, "*Right shoulders forward!*"

The view that presented itself, when we turned our faces towards the Bay, I shall never forget, and can never hope to describe. The declining rays of the setting sun shed a flood of golden light over the placid waters of the ocean ; sharpening the outline of the rugged promontories on the coast ; resting on the volcanic summit of Ischia ; tingeing the ancient turrets of St. Elmo, and gilding the spires and cupolas of Naples till they shone with an almost rival splendour. The bright light on the western side, and the deep shadow on the east of those objects, tended, as artists express it, to render more articulate their beautiful and varied outlines. The Bay itself lay in comparative shadow ; but the sunbeams, passing onwards, threw into bright relief the hill of Camaldoli, and the picturesque ridge of Posilipo, resting at last on the towering promontory of Sorrento.

On the other side of the picture lay the magnificent and rich plain of Campo Felice ; and this too, like the Bay, was seen in subdued shadow, save where the last beams of the sun rested on some prominent clump of foliage, or glittered on the windows and white walls of some opposing villa ; and farther onwards still, the lofty Appenines, already invested in the grey tints of evening, stretched away till they were lost in the extreme distance. Immediately before us, thin fleecy clouds, fringed by the light of the departing sunbeams, floated over the summit of Monte Somma ; above us hung a black canopy of smoke from the crater, and beneath us lay the desert Faraonte, now rendered blacker and more dismal as the shades of evening drew on.

"Is it not a lovely and varied prospect?" said Annette, as she drew my attention to some merchant vessels that were standing into the Bay, their white sails still reflecting the rays of the sun.

"Varied, indeed!" I replied. "Around us, a perfect chaos of confusion, barrenness, and horror; the earth

trembling under our feet as if opening to engulf us ; and a mixture of hissing, crackling, thundering noises in our ears, enough to make us think that we stood at the very gates of Acheron. And beneath us, a landscape too vast for the eye to encompass, composed of every variety of form which earth and ocean can assume, and bathed in every tint of colour with which Nature most delights to robe her loveliness !”

“ But do you not admire the Bay,” said Pauline, “ how majestically it sleeps in the shadow ; and the villages and towns that sprinkle the beach beneath our feet, smiling as cheerfully as if no dreadful Vesuvius were nigh !”

“ Dreadful Vesuvius, indeed !” replied her sister ; “ yet, happily, how little dreaded ! The thought that destruction may every moment be preparing in the bowels of this awful mountain does not cause the voice of the Neapolitan singer to sound less gaily, or the limbs of the dancer to move with less activity.”

“ And is not this a merciful allotment of an all bounteous Providence ?” said Rodolphe.

“ It is, indeed !” replied Annette ; “ but instead of philosophising, let us proceed to show our friend the wonders of the crater.”

The extent of this awful opening I shall not attempt to guess at, but I may well be justified in calling it immense. We took our station on the edge of the abrupt precipice which forms its western side ; and as I gazed into the gulf beneath, I cannot describe the various feelings that rushed unbidden upon me. Awe, and wonder, and dread, and veneration for the mighty Being, one of whose wondrous works I was contemplating, were predominant ; accompanied by that indescribable sort of fascination, so beautifully alluded to by Lord Byron, which would almost seem to impel the spectator of such an abyss to hurl himself headlong within :

When mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o’er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns ; you can’t gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it !

Of the deep, black, cavernous recesses beneath, we could only obtain partial and occasional glimpses. Thick wreaths of rising smoke obscured the downward prospect; and it was only as volume after volume rolled away, that we could obtain a passing glance at the mysterious chasm below. A mixture of sounds, the most confused, incongruous, and appalling, issued as it were from the very bowels of the mountain. Now an awful report, like the explosion of cannon or the rolling of thunder, reverberated through the hollow caverns; now a quick, rattling, continued sound, as if of some cyclopean soldiery discharging a platoon of muskets; then a loud hissing noise would catch up the echo, and this again would be followed by a sound resembling the boiling of some enormous cauldron. The whole brought vividly to my recollection the description given by Tasso of the direful noises that issued from the Enchanted Wood:

Esce all hor de la selva un suon repente,
 Che par rimbombo di terren chi treme;
 E'l mormorar di gli austri in lui si sente,
 E'l pianto d'onda chi fra scogli geme.
 Come rugge il leon, fischia il serpente,
 Com urla il lupo, e come l'orso freme,
 V'odi, e v'odi le trombe, e v'odi il tuono;
 Tanti e si fatti suoni esprime un suono!

Thick volumes of smoke followed each new explosion, or throe, as it were, of the labouring mountain. Masses of stone were projected into the air to a considerable height, from whence they fell again into the yawning gulf below; and sometimes a huge fragment of rock, detached from the rest, plunged thundering down the side of the precipice, till the sound of its echo was lost in the depths. Scarcely a breath of air was stirring on the mountain; and the smoke ascended high in the still expanse, broken only by the occasional flashes of flame, which shot through or towered above it.

The shades of night had now closed around us; and the interior of the crater was only visible, as from time to time it was illuminated by the occasional flashes of flame, that burst from its yawning gulf, and shone beautifully in the darkness.

“Let us leave this appalling place!” said Annette, who had all along been gazing intently over the edge of the precipice. “I can contemplate the awful prospect no longer!”

“Let us leave it!” rejoined Pauline; “my head is already giddy with gazing.”

“Let us leave it!” added Rodolphe; “it is like the first entrance of Vathek into the Palace of Fire; every moment we linger only tends to break the charm.”

The torches with which the guides had supplied themselves were accordingly lighted, and we commenced our descent in silence; the scene we had just witnessed affording too much food for thought to admit of conversation.

As we once more passed through the vale of Faraonte, the scene was peculiarly striking. This dreary place, rendered still more dreary by the darkness—for the light of our torches showing it obscurely, only tended to increase its horrors—we traversed with the silence of death. The guides led the way; and the flame of their flambeaux, casting a passing glare on the rugged outlines of the blocks of stone and lava that lay around, rested on the flowing dresses of Annette and Pauline, who followed close behind upon their mules. Rodolphe and myself brought up the rear on foot, stumbling at every step over some unseen mass that impeded our progress. A few yards only on either side of our path were rendered visible by the torches; all beyond was blackness and obscurity, save when an occasional burst of flame from the crater above displayed to us for a moment all the horrors of the place.

I had advanced to ask some questions of the senior guide, as we were once more ascending Cantaroni to bid farewell to the hospitable monks, when I observed him stop and cross himself devoutly. I asked what it was that caused this act of devotion.

“We are passing the *Cratere del Francese*, signor,” he replied, “where a few years since a young Frenchman threw himself into a stream of burning lava!”

“And was lost?” I inquired.

“Not a remnant of him was ever seen, signor!” said the guide. “He was burned, doubtless, to a cinder as soon as he touched the burning stream!”

Having taken leave of the Monks of St. Salvador, a short time sufficed to bring us once more to Resina, where I ascended the carriage of my kind friends, and accompanied them for the night to their hospitable villa.

CHAPTER XV.

NAPLES.


Me meminisse juvabit

VIRGIL.

“SEE Naples, and die !” was once remarked by some dreary tourist, and every vain Neapolitan caught the echo up. “See Naples, and live as long as you can enjoy it !” is the maxim which I would recommend in preference to the attention of my readers.

Naples is, indeed, a place where one may be truly said to awaken to a full consciousness of existence. The balmy air, laden with the fragrance of the orange, the citron, and the myrtle ; the magnificent landscapes that present themselves on every side, in all those varieties of form and hue which the pencils of Claude, or Titian, or Salvator, loved to portray ; the interesting remains of antiquity which recal the names and the deeds of “the mighty men of Rome,” and fill the memory with the enchanting imaginings of Homer and Virgil ; all this, added to the delightful society, which may be said to consist of the gay and the talented of almost every nation, form a combination of attractions not perhaps to be equalled in any other corner of the earth.

With so much to see and so much to enjoy, it may be supposed that during my stay at Naples my time was fully occupied. In the society of my kind French friends, I visited every spot, pleasing for its beauty, or interesting for its antiquity. With them I wandered through the now deserted streets of the once populous Pompeii ; and, lingering among the ruins of its houses, its temples, and



its theatres, I wondered to think how like ourselves were the romans of two thousand years ago ! we threaded our way through streets which still bore the marks of the wheels by which they were traversed so many centuries ago ; we entered the shops on either side, and could almost fancy that the bustling shopman would appear behind his counter to receive us. The signs of the different tradesmen hung over their doors ; and so similar were they to those of modern times, that had we not known we were in Pompeii, we might have fancied ourselves in some deserted suburbs of Naples itself.

One of these insignia particularly attracted my attention. It was the sign of "*The Chequers*," the same in size and in form as that by which every dram-shop in London is now, and has for long been designated. We passed through the doorway ; the threshold of which was much worn, and showed that in its time it had been a place of frequent resort. Around the walls were ranged the shelves on which the flasks of liquor had stood, and up the centre of the area ran the counter, covered, like those of the "gin palaces" in the British metropolis, with a slab of marble. Traces of spilled liquor, which had gathered round the foot of the over-filled glass, or which some trembling hand had shaken from the cup in conveying it to the lips, were still visible ; and perhaps the tidy hand of the priestess of the place was employed in wiping away those stains, when she was overtaken by the dismal shower of ashes, and "death like a statuary modelled his victim !"

Further on were the barracks of the military, the walls covered with rude drawings and ill written names, which the hands of the soldiers had traced in their idle hours. In one street was the baker's shop, in another the butcher's stall ; and on the exterior walls of the public edifices were placarded bills, announcing the performance that might be witnessed at the theatre in the evening, or intimating that a gladiatorial exhibition would be held at the amphitheatre on the morrow. Every thing around us, indeed, tended to realize the scene, and to annihilate, as it were, the two thousand years that had elapsed, since the bill-sticker pla-

carded his bills, and the dram-drinker quaffed his liquor.

“Here,” I remarked to my companions, “we have an apt practical illustration of the maxim, that all things, save man, are mutable. *He* is still the same; he still eats, drinks, sleeps, goes to the play, and frequents the exhibition, just as he did twenty centuries ago.”

“Yes,” replied Annette; “but while in this city of the dead, I think we may extend the maxim from man to his dwelling place; and say that all things have suffered change, save man and Pompeii.”

“I recollect,” continued Rodolphe, “a beautiful illustration of this, which we owe, I think, to my countryman Charles Nodier. Suppose that a contemporary of Augustus were to arise from the tomb and revisit his former dwelling place, with what wonder would he gaze around him. ‘Place of my earthly habitation,’ he would exclaim, ‘all hail! To thee alone, of all the cities on earth, has it been granted to defy the destroying hand of time; and to the minutest object of my affections has the immunity been extended! Here is my couch, there my favourite author. My paintings are still fresh as when the hand of the artist spread the colours on the wall. Come, let us perambulate the town; let us visit the theatre. I recognise the very spot where I joined, for the first time, in the plaudits that hailed the splendid scenes of Terence and Euripides!’”

It has been observed by the talented and classical Chateaubriand in speaking of Pompeii—and while wandering through its ruins I was forcibly struck by the justice of the remark—that it is matter of regret that everything was not left here exactly as it was found. Instead of removing the furniture, the implements of trade, the statues, and other curiosities, to the museum at Portici, they should have been allowed to remain in the very spots where they were discovered. Doors, windows, floors, and roofs, should have been carefully restored to the buildings, in order to preserve those precious relics, and prevent the paintings on the panels from being defaced. The city walls should have been rebuilt, the gates repaired, a guard of soldiers stationed within the barracks, and buildings erected for the residence of overseers and inspectors.

What an additional pleasure would the traveller have derived, had he found the rooms of the houses filled with their ancient furniture; the kitchens with all their implements of cookery; the cellars with their amphoræ of wine, the lady's toilet with all its utensils and ornaments of dress, exactly in the same condition as when they were last used by the Roman fair. As it is, Pompeii is the most attractive ruin in Italy. Had the course recommended by Chateaubriand been adopted, it would have been the most wonderful museum in the world.

On the Vesuvian side of Naples, we had much to see and much to admire. We visited the Torre del Greco, so rich in antiquarian associations; we skirted round the base of Vesuvius, where the citron, and orange, and myrtle, added fragrance to the air, and the vine wove its fantastic but graceful tracery over our heads; and we wandered up the banks of the romantic Sarno, extending our excursions far across the Campo Felice, almost to the very foot of the Appenines.

But it was from the parties we made in the direction of Pozzuoli, the country which Homer and Virgil have sung, and where the tomb of the latter is still exhibited, that I derived the greatest gratification. With what a crowd of mingled feelings did I first gaze on the scene that presented itself, when our boat bore us up into the Bay of Baiæ! What recollections did the prospect of this once most magnificent of cities, and still most beautiful of ruins, recal! The country-house of Nero; the villa of Cæsar; the temples of Venus, and Mercury, and Diana; the Camere di Venere, where were celebrated the most secret and revolting of mysteries; the magnificent baths; the luxurious domiciles of Marius and Hortensius; the splendid abode of Lucullus, where the monster Tiberius gave up his detested life; all in succession brought to mind the most interesting events of Roman story, and tended to realize our ideas of Roman splendour. Here it was that "the mighty men of Rome," her emperors, her generals, her senators, retired from the bustle of war and the intrigues of politics, and gave themselves up to the indulgence of every prodigal pleasure which accumulated wealth and unbounded power could

purchase. Situated in the most delightful climate in the world, and surrounded by a variety of the most enchanting landscapes, this was the delicious retreat for which the Goddess of Love, with all her licentious train, deserted the shores of the golden Paphos. Nothing that could minister to pleasure or pamper luxury was wanting here; the beautiful and the gay of Rome crowded to the favourite retreat, and the very sea gave up its bed to make way for the stupendous piles of their palaces. Deep beneath the surface of the pellucid waters may still be seen the pavements of their streets, the crumbling walls of their houses, and the broken fragments of their pillars.

Let imagination but rebuild those sumptuous structures, repair those splendid baths, restore to their original splendour those magnificent theatres, and fill them with all the beauty and nobility of Rome; let it but convert those miserable fishing-boats that ply across the bay, into gay, gilded barges, with sails of purple, and masts festooned with wreaths of flowers; let it supply the soft strains of enchanting music, and fill the streets with the pompous processions of the priests of Diana, and scatter on the sandy beach, beneath tall promontories embowered in foliage, and crowded by the pillars and porticos of graceful temples, a few dancing groups of the gay votaries of pleasure, and some idea may be formed of what Baiæ was in the days of its grandeur, ere it was devastated by the fire and sword of Theodoric, and ere the ocean had asserted its right to its ancient bed.

Onward we passed; and scarcely had we left the splendid ruins of Baiæ behind, when new objects of interest presented themselves. We lingered on the rocky margin of Avernus, and recalled all the horrors of the Homeric machinery; we followed Æneas into the cave of the Cumæan Sybil; we traced the footsteps of Ulysses, and, traversing the delicious Elysian Fields, beneath a canopy of tall mulberries and vine-supporting poplars, arrived at the banks of the Mare Morto.

With what an inimitable effect of contrast has the imagination of the poets here placed, within little more than a hundred paces of each other, the abodes of the blest and the regions of the damned! On one side we could

see the place where the three-headed Cerberus kept his watch, and where the dissolute Ixion whirled round with the revolutions of his inexorable wheel. Up the steep acclivity of the opposing hill, the ever-labouring Sisyphus rolled his stone; immersed in the waters of the lake beneath us stood the unfortunate Tantalus, the fluid still shrinking from his parched and longing lips; and chained to a rock upon its margin, which we thought we could almost identify, lay the miserable Tityus, with never-dying vultures gnawing at his heart. On the other side lay before us the spot where the shades of the blest were said to enjoy an endless felicity; wandering through flower-enamelled valleys, and by the side of murmuring brooks, amid the never-ceasing strains of the most delicious harmony.

Farther on, we ascended the Promontory of Miseno, and enjoyed another enchanting view of the Bay of Naples, with its lovely coast and vine-maturing islands; while beneath us lay the great Roman Port of the Tyrrhene sea, where the elder Pliny commanded the fleet at the time of the first eruption of Vesuvius. From the spot where we stood, we could trace the progress of that great man as he stretched across the bay to Stabiæ, where he was doomed to remain a victim to his daring attempt to pry into the mysteries of nature.

The whole of this enchanting district, indeed, whether considered separately, as presenting a variety of the most magnificent landscapes, or taken in connexion with the numerous associations to which it gives rise, forms one of the most delightful spots to which the traveller can resort. I never recal the excursions I made there, without experiencing the most pleasing reminiscences. I may say with truth, *Me meminisse juvabit!*

But I will not detain the reader by recounting all the varied thoughts and feelings which crowded upon me on visiting this delightful neighbourhood, and which are interesting perhaps only to myself. If he have patience to accompany me in a pedestrian excursion which I made to Pæstum, I promise to trouble him no more with the lovely environs of Naples.

CHAPTER XVI.

A PEDESTRIAN TRIP TO PÆSTUM.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy ;
Or in the night imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear !

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE weather was peculiarly propitious for an excursion of the description I contemplated ; and having prevailed on two of my shipmates to join me, we packed up a few necessaries, such as we could carry without inconvenience and fixed a day for starting on our trip.

Many kind friends we had, who told us of the dangers we were likely to encounter from the numerous banditti who infested the mountains ; and as we did not think it prudent altogether to reject the cautions we received, we armed ourselves as completely as our means would admit. Each of us packed up a supply of powder and bullets in his knapsack ; one of my companions carried a double-barrelled gun ; I provided myself with a brace of Mortimer's pistols ; and though the remaining middy was furnished with nothing but a huge stick, it required but a slight glance at the massive proportions and herculean arm of the youth, to be satisfied that this weapon would be of no small service should we be unfortunate enough to come to close quarters. It is true, that, so slenderly appointed we could not expect to cope with the ferocious bands of marauders, of whose daring and numbers we had heard so much ; but with the thoughtless ardour of young men, who laugh at difficulties and court danger for herself, we imagined we would at least be enabled to make a formidable stand, and to acquit ourselves in a way that would bring no discredit on the service.

As we were all of us already well acquainted with the

country that extends between Naples and the banks of the Sarno, we hired a boat to convey us at once across the Bay to Castel-à-mare, from whence we purposed to pass the beautiful chain of the Sorrentine Mountains to Amalfi.

It was about three o'clock on the morning of the day appointed that we left the ship, and, embarking in our little Neapolitan skiff, commenced our voyage.

We had proceeded, I should think, about as far as the centre of the Bay, when, in a pure Italian sky, unobscured by a single rack of vapour, the glorious sun arose. Never did I witness so magnificent a spectacle. I have seen the rise of the sun in many different quarters of the globe, both upon the shore, and in the wide expanse of the ocean when not a speck of land was in view; but nowhere was the sight so magnificent as here. The resplendent disc emerged at once from its ocean bed; preceded by no "pale gradations," ushered in by no grey twilight dawn. In an instant Capri, Ischia, Procida, the summits of Posilipo and Monte Nuovo, the spires and cupolas of Naples, the steep sides of Vesuvius, the beetling promontory of Sorrento, and the distant peaks of the Appenines, were in a blaze of light. A long pathway, as it were, of burnished gold stretched across the waters of the Bay, over whose placid surface numerous fishing boats were plying on the business of their traffic; their masts and sails fringed with the light of the glorious illumination, and the spray from their oars glittering like scattered gems in the sunbeams. The gentle land breeze had not yet died away, and the slightly rippled water sparkled in the fresh blush of the morning. Life and animation had succeeded to the dull sleep of night; the fishermen assembled on the quays of the little towns scattered along the beach, or, stretching out in their tiny cobbles, spread their nets in the bay; while the tuneful notes of their chorus song floated softly across the silent waters. Glancing in the rays of the sun, the white-walled Portici lay before us. The hour, the place, the surrounding scenery, all tended to recal the fate of the rebel Masaniello; and I could almost fancy I saw his tall, manly form, conspicuous amid the group of attendant fishermen; his "sister dear" clinging to the skirts of his garment, and listening in silent transport,

while his deep toned voice took the lead in that magnificent, and, to the hour, so appropriate chorus—

“Behold how brightly breaks the morning!”

At length the land-breeze died away, and the sea-breeze setting in somewhat more strongly than usual, our barge-men had no occasion to importune St. Antoine for wind. From our position, however, we could afford to keep two points away, and we landed safely at Castel-à-mare in good time for an early breakfast.

At the foot of a picturesque hill, where may still be traced the ruins of Stabiæ, and whose summit is now occupied by a beautiful regal villa, encircled by an amphitheatre of the most delightful landscapes, and washed by the waters of the Bay of Naples, stands the lovely Castel-à-mare. Reader! have you ever visited this enchanting place? If not, and you are willing to be guided by the advice of an humble midshipman, lose not a moment in repairing thither. From no description can you ever hope to obtain the slightest idea of its unparalleled beauty. It may be said to be unique in loveliness; and whoever attempts to transfer its varied features even to the canvass, will find that he has undertaken a vain task. A pleasure almost worth living for, is the virgin view of Castel-à-mare.

After an excellent breakfast, to which the morning air enabled us to do ample justice, we commenced our ascent of that part of the Appenines which separates the Bay of Naples from the Gulf of Salerno, and which is generally known by the name of the Sorrentine Range, or the Mountains of Minerva.

Never did I traverse so magnificent and rich a country. All the charms which wood and water, and grassy slopes, and towering precipices, and smiling villages, can give to rural landscape, presented themselves here. Deserting the main road, we pursued our way beneath the shadow of ancient chestnut trees, which spread their majestic branches over our heads, reminding us of the poet's "*ingenti ramorum umbra*." The ground over which we trod presented one continued thicket of the most beau-

tiful shrubs; and we were obliged to open a way for ourselves through the interlacing branches of the myrtle and arbutus, which shed their delicious fragrance round us as we passed.

Sometimes shut in on every side by those vast forests, we could see nothing but the verdant canopy above, and a long vista of moss-grown trunks and luxuriant evergreens beneath. At others, when we had gained one of the frequent points of elevation, where perhaps some tall precipice sinking beneath our feet, caused a wide opening in the surrounding foliage, a noble expanse of hill and dale lay before us. Green cultivated valleys, sometimes hemmed in by high impending rocks, and sometimes sloping upward with a gentle acclivity till they were lost in the wood-clad steeps of the surrounding mountains; streams of water meandering gently through the forest glade, or dashing with a sullen roar over rocks and precipices, till they were hid beneath masses of overhanging foliage, and clouds of vapoury spray; here and there, perched on the very highest pinnacles of the hills, the tall circular turrets of the "*colombiere*" were visible; and these, with occasional towns, ancient castles, villages, and convents, scattered along the green valleys beneath, or "bosomed high 'mid tufted trees" on the slopes of the mountains, formed the most prominent features of the landscape unfolded to our view, at each successive opening in the forest. I have seldom seen a place that, within so small a circle, presents so many splendid subjects for the pencil, or that more fully combines all the varied features that compose the *beau ideal* of the mountain landscape.

A somewhat fatiguing, though truly delightful walk, brought us about mid-day to the highest summit of the range; and as our appetites began to warn us that it was time to take some refreshment, we looked around for a convenient spot to spread the frugal meal with which we had furnished ourselves.

We were clambering down a steep and precipitous path, for this purpose, when our attention was arrested by the sound of some very harmonious voices trolling forth the chorus of a well-known national canzonette. Pursuing our course in the direction of the music, which seemed

to proceed from a neighbouring clump of trees, it was not long till we came in view of a group of peasants, who were resting during the heat of the day; being thus far on their road to Naples with fruit and other rural produce for market. They were reclining upon a green sloping bank, completely sheltered from the rays of the sun by the overshadowing branches of some tall majestic chestnuts; a brook of clear water brawled over its pebbly bed at their feet; and on the opposite side, the little amphitheatre was inclosed by a high craggy rock, round whose brow clustered masses of luxuriant foliage.

The picturesque costumes of these people; the short jackets, large shadowy hats, and laced sandals of the men, and the gay lively colours of the female attire, harmonized well with the surrounding scenery, and imparted to the whole a peculiarly pleasing effect. Our offer to join our little stock of provisions to theirs was cordially accepted, and we were soon on the best possible terms. The wine-flask circulated briskly, amid lively conversation and peals of laughter; the song echoed through the woods, and we joined the nimble-footed "*contadine*" to the best of our ability in the graceful Tarantella. Our new friends communicated to us a great deal of useful information regarding our journey, and we parted with many greetings and kind wishes on both sides. For our own parts, we congratulated ourselves on having had an opportunity of forming an opinion of the Italian peasant from a criterion more correct than is afforded by the *lazzaroni* at Naples.

The limbs of my companions and myself having been for some time more accustomed to pace the level planks of a man-of-war, than to encounter the rude precipices and tangled passes of the Appenine Mountains, we arose from our slight repast with stiff and aching joints, and pursued our path with somewhat less alacrity than when we first breasted the hill above Castle-à-mare. Our road, though we were now fain to adhere to the beaten track, was still rough and precipitous; winding through deep ravines and up difficult passes, till it at length emerged from the mountain defiles, and skirted along the tops of the cliffs that overhang the Gulf of Salerno. Here, a magnificent panorama of land and water opened before

us, and presented a prospect to be rivalled only by the Bay of Naples itself. Worn out as we were, however, our only object at present was to reach the place of our destination; and it was with no small delight that, after winding down an abrupt precipitous path at the bottom of a deep ravine, we at length entered Amalfi.

Amalfi, beautiful and picturesque as it appears from a distance, rearing its humble walls at the foot of majestic mountains verdant with foliage, and of high overhanging rocks surmounted by ruined battlements and broken towers, has within an appearance of extreme wretchedness, filth, and desolation; different indeed from that Amalfi whose wealthy merchants once monopolized the trade of the Levant, whose alliance was courted by the neighbouring powers, and on whose valourous inhabitants Pope Leo conferred the honourable title of Defenders of the Faith. Mean, miserable-looking houses, narrow, dirty streets, and the scattered ruins of battlements and towers, are all that remain of this once opulent city. The mistress of the ocean, the centre of commerce, she who gave laws to the maritime states of Italy, is now nothing more than a paltry station for fishermen!

The Albergo to which we were directed, if such it could be called, which had more the appearance of a poor lodging-house than of a public inn, was not in its exterior more inviting than the other houses of the town, and in its interior it bore every mark of extreme discomfort. Our hostess was a tall, gaunt, masculine-featured woman, the dirty disordered state of whose attire was in perfect unison with the appearance of her dwelling; and our host presented an appearance by no means more prepossessing. He was a strong muscular man, with the dark eye and prominent nose of the Italian countenance; a red woollen cap was drawn over his brows, and a long undressed beard and moustache covered the lower part of his face.

Sullen and disobliging as persons of this class in poverty generally are, it was with difficulty that we could prevail on either of these sinister individuals to attend to our wants. The hostess moved sluggishly about, arranging, the mean articles of furniture which the ill-appointed kitchen contained; and her husband, for such we pre-

sumed him to be, did not even deign to notice our entrance, nor did he interrupt for a moment his occupation of burnishing the lock of an old rusty musket. It was only after many fair words and entreaties, that we at last procured some fish and eggs; which, as our hostess did not seem inclined to dress, I was obliged to exert my own talents in the culinary art, and to turn cook for the party. With the assistance of a little pepper, salt, and bread, I accordingly contrived to produce a very savoury mess, on which we supped, with a hearty appetite, washing down the whole as we best could with some miserable *vin ordinaire* and worse acquadente. After this frugal repast, we bathed our feet and the aching joints of our limbs in warm oil—certainly the best remedy in all similar cases of fatigue—and prepared to retire to rest.

The room to which our hostess conducted us was a large, unfurnished, empty-looking apartment, on the floor of which were spread three miserable pallets, which she told us were our beds. As we had already seen that remonstrance with this worthy personage was in vain, we made no objections to such wretched accommodation, but having wished her a good night, began to dispose of ourselves with as much regard to comfort as we could.

When we looked round upon the bare floor, and empty walls, and barred casement of our dismal apartment, through which a solitary lamp, standing on a small decrepid table, spread a sombre and uncertain light, we could not help recalling all the stories that had been so carefully repeated to us, of murders, and robberies, and banditti; recollections which the sour visage and gaunt form of our hostess, together with the sullen conduct of the host, and the constant passing in and out of sundry ill-favoured fellows, whom we had seen prowling about the kitchen during supper, were by no means calculated to dispel. My companions were the first to hint their suspicions that all was not right; and I confess I was a good deal confirmed in the same opinion, when, on proceeding to secure the door, I found that it was furnished with neither lock nor bolt. However, it was now too late to retreat, so we determined to make such provision for our safety as our situation would admit, and await the result, whatever it might be.

Having accordingly carefully loaded our fire-arms with ball, we agreed, as the best arrangement, that one of us should watch while the others slept; each undertaking the duty of guard alternately. The bed opposite the door was fixed on as that to be occupied by the sentry for the time; who, being armed with the double-gun, we thought could in this position more effectually range the entrance, in case of any hostile intrusion. Lots were then drawn to determine who should first discharge the duties of watch; and these arrangements being completed, we retired at last to our miserable pallets.

But alas! we might have saved ourselves the trouble of appointing a watch, for, drowsy though we were, not an individual of the party could close an eye. No sooner was the light extinguished, than myriads of those insect-dispellers of sleep, generally known by a more familiar epithet, issued from their lurking places, and proceeded to feast so ravenously on our blood, that they promised to leave but little to be drawn by the banditti. To sleep, or even to remain in bed, was impossible; so, after tossing about till we had almost fretted ourselves into a fever, we rose, rekindled our lamp, and commenced to solace ourselves with cigars and what cognac still remained in our travelling canteen. This amusement lasted till past midnight, when our fatigue at last became so excessive, that we could no longer resist it; and accordingly, after having fumigated our beds with tobacco-smoke, which we found a most specific exorcisor of our insect guests, we once more retired to rest.

It was now my turn to watch; but not trusting altogether to my powers of wakefulness, I took the precaution of placing upon a chair, which I set up against the door, the large brazen caldron in which we had performed our ablutions the previous evening; in such a manner that no one could enter without arousing me, should I chance to be asleep. The gun I carefully disposed of by my side in bed, with the muzzle pointed in the direction of the door; and in order to prevent being taken unawares, my hand upon the lock.

My companions were now fast asleep, snoring away in most harmonious concert; and it was not long till I too

yielded to the influence of extreme fatigue, and sunk into a state of dozing slumber. It was a disturbed and feverish sleep. Terrific visions of blood and horror flitted in appalling succession before my wandering fancy. At one time I thought myself in the woods, surrounded by dark-visaged men in long floating cloaks; my pistols missing fire whenever I attempted to discharge them, and when I fled, I stumbled and fell at every step I took. Then I supposed myself asleep in a hut among the mountains; an approaching footstep seemed to arouse me; a tall man, with a lantern and bare dagger, leant over my couch, and when I tried to call for assistance my tongue refused utterance. Sometimes again I was at sea in an open boat, overtaken and surprised by pirates, observing the carnage of my companions, and every stroke of my sabre missing its aim. Convulsive starts changed from time to time the subject of these horrible imaginings; but blood and assassination were still the theme.

At length my dreams reverted to my present situation. The supper scene passed before my imagination with many additional circumstances of suspicion; the manner in which I had barricaded the door, my present position in bed, the gun at my side, all was faithfully represented to my dreaming fancy. I then thought I heard a rustling noise in the apartment, but when I attempted to grasp my weapon my fingers refused to move. Then a loud sound as of something falling heavily on the floor rung in my ear. I started up instinctively in bed, and was in an instant wide awake. Nothing stirred; everything in the apartment was dark and silent, and yet I could have sworn that I heard the noise that awoke me.

“Did you hear nothing?” I whispered to my companions; but they were both fast asleep, and answered me only with a disturbed groan.

I continued for some time to listen eagerly; and presently I thought I could distinguish a footstep treading lightly in the next apartment. By degrees the sound became more distinct, and I could plainly hear some one stealing gently along the passage towards the door of our apartment. In an instant I put my gun on cock and raised it to my shoulder, determined to fire as soon as the intruder ap-

prized me of his entrance by the overturn of the chair and brazen basin. The steps ceased; a hand lifted the latch; my finger was on the trigger; the slightest additional pressure, and the gun would be discharged.

"Who's there?" I exclaimed, in a loud, and perhaps somewhat agitated voice.

"It is I, signor!" replied the gruff voice of our landlord. "The day is breaking, and the boat is ready to convey you to Salerno. I have brought you a light," he continued, as he pushed open the door, and the chair and basin rolled into the middle of the apartment. The gun dropped in an instant from my hands; a cold perspiration ran over my frame, and I sunk back upon my pallet.

The noise occasioned by the falling chair speedily awoke my companions, who now sprung from their beds, each with a pistol in his hand, ready for action. The host, whose face bore the expression of utter astonishment at this warlike array, stood in the middle of the floor, holding forward his lamp, as if anxious to ascertain the meaning of such suspicious movements. It was an excellent scene for the comic pencil of Cruikshank; so ridiculous, indeed, that I had no sooner explained the affair, than my two friends dropped their weapons and burst out into one uncontrollable fit of laughter. For my own part, I confess I could not at the time contemplate the circumstance in a ludicrous point of view. How nearly had I become a murderer!

Scarcely had the sun appeared in the horizon when we were once more afloat, running with a fine breeze up the Gulf towards Salerno. The scenery here is so totally different from that in the Bay of Naples, that it would be in vain to compare the two. The coast of the latter, if we except the precipitous rocks near Miseno and Sorrento, rises for the most part with a comparatively gentle slope from the water's edge, displaying generally a smiling border of turf or vineyards. In the Gulf of Salerno, on the contrary—at least on the side of Amelfi, for towards Pesto there is nothing but a vast unbroken plain, backed by a range of undulating mountains—the shore is bold and prominent; rising at once with a steep ascent from the sea, and covered to the very top with the most luxuriant

verdure. Deep craggy ravines, through which brawling mountain torrents discharge themselves into the gulf, intersect the mountain-ridge in different directions; while towering rocks, generally crowned by a church or a convent, and, in the more immediate foreground, naked beetling promontories, break the uniformity which the extended mass of foliage might otherwise produce. Along the shore, a succession of towns and villages present themselves, perched, as it were, upon platforms of the abrupt rock; and far up, even on the very brows of the huge rocks, houses and churches are occasionally seen, hanging dizzily over the water. Orange groves, vineyards, and gardens, skirting round villas and convents, give an appearance of cultivation to a coast otherwise so wild and unsubdued.

Having landed about two miles beyond Salerno, we dismissed our boat, and set out for Eboli, where we intended to spend another night before proceeding to Pæstum.

The country through which we passed during our walk was extremely beautiful, consisting of rich cultivated fields and clumps of fine trees; with the lofty peaks of the Appenines, and the rugged brow of the towering Alburnus in the back-ground. Groups of peasants, in the picturesque costumes which the works of Salvator Rosa have rendered so celebrated, were employed in tilling the ground, or were regaling themselves, during the heat of the day, in little arbours erected close on the side of the road. The whole presented a scene on which the eye of the traveller loves to linger; and so frequent and prolonged were the various halts we made to admire the landscape or converse with the peasantry, that it was evening before we arrived at Eboli.

Our accommodation in this pretty little town was every way superior to what we had met with at Amalfi; and it was not long till our obliging hostess set before us an excellent dinner, consisting of such substantial fare as our whetted appetites rendered extremely acceptable. A bottle of what had once been rum, but which was now so strongly impregnated with cinnamon and other spices as to be little better than liquid fire, furnished a glass of grog, with which, in sailor fashion, our repast was concluded; and

we retired to bed in high spirits, determined to pursue our journey early in the morning.

Notwithstanding all our good resolutions, however, and owing probably to the rum having proved a rather over powerful sleeping portion, the sun was already high in the heavens before we left our beds. To go to Pæstum on foot, and return before sunset, as we had originally intended, was therefore now impossible; and our hostess did all in her power to persuade us to postpone our journey till the succeeding day. She assured us that the country was perfectly infested by banditti, who had of late committed many daring outrages; and that wilfully to allow ourselves to be benighted between Pæstum and Eboli was little better than suicide. However, as our leave was limited, we determined to run all risk of these formidable marauders rather than waste another day; and accordingly, trusting a good deal to our fire-arms and the little prospect of plunder which three solitary pedestrians afforded, we ordered our careful landlady to have a good supper ready for us on our return, and started.

The route from Eboli to Pæstum presents nothing particularly interesting. A vast heathy plain, covered at intervals with thickets of brush-wood and clumps of trees, intersected by the waters of the Silaro, and grazed by vast herds of buffaloes, form the most striking features of the landscape. Our road at first traversed the royal chase of Persano, which abounds in game of all sorts, and is said to afford occupation for two hundred keepers; it then crossed the Silaro by a very handsome bridge, and continued to pass over the same uninteresting moorland, till it brought us at last to a patch of cultivated ground, fenced round with pretty hedges of wild vine.

Here, all at once, the architraves and columns of three beautiful Doric temples burst upon the view. It was Pæstum. On a smooth green level turf, unbroken save by a few thickets of brush-wood, and here and there a solitary tree, with brambles and other creeping shrubs clinging round their columns, these splendid ruins stand; commanding a magnificent prospect of the Gulf of Salerno, the promontory of Sorrento and those beautiful islands once the fabled abode of the Syrens. All around

was silence and solitude; and we wandered among these sad remnants of the glory of the Sybarites, with feelings at once of admiration and regret.

We were seated beside the fragment of a broken column within the area of the Temple of Neptune, when a stranger stepped in between the distant pillars, and stood for a moment contemplating us. He was a tall, athletic, finely-formed man, with a dark sallow face and fiery eye; a large slouch hat shaded his brows, and a short cloak hung gracefully down from his left shoulder. Round his waist he wore a broad belt, in which were fastened a hunting knife and brace of pistols, and under his arm he carried a long single-barrelled gun.

Having invited him to partake of the contents of our canteen, we inquired if we could procure a lodging for the night any where in the neighbourhood.

"There is no lodging to be had in the neighbourhood," he replied; but I can conduct you to Eboli through a by-path much shorter than the main road."

"Are the banditti numerous on the way?" I inquired.

"Numerous enough," was the reply; "more than can well live by their calling."

"Do you know their haunts?"

"Some of them certainly. I am a hunter, and come in frequent collision with them. You are Englishmen; why are you travelling on foot?"

"Because it suits our pleasure," I replied.

"Enough! I even thought as much. I am ready to conduct you on the way."

"What!" said I, "before you stipulate your reward?"

"I leave it to yourselves; you can pay me at Eboli. But let us proceed; the sun will soon go down, and the path is swampy and difficult to traverse in the dark."

There was something in the swarthy scowling features and froward speech of this man which was certainly any thing but prepossessing; and I would have hesitated to accept his services, had I not considered that there was less danger in accepting than refusing them. His suspicious appearance seemed also to have attracted the notice of my companions; and as we were passing out of the ruin to commence our route, one of them came up to me, and whispered in my ear—

"Mind your weather-eye, Ned! Shoot that villain dead the moment he attempts any treachery!"

Determined accordingly to keep a cautious watch upon the fellow's movements, I took my station close by his side. As far as the banks of the Silaro he conducted us by the same road that we had followed in the morning; but after passing the river he diverged considerably to the left, and led the way through a wet marshy tract, covered with tall brushwood and straggling trees. The path was so extremely bad, from the wet and slimy soil, that we made but slow progress; and it was not long till we were overtaken by the dim twilight.

We had proceeded in this manner long enough, as I thought, to bring us to our destination, and I began to grow extremely impatient. I had inquired several times at the guide if we were near the town, and his answer invariably was, "*We shall reach it presently;*" so my amazement may be conceived when I at last caught a glimpse of the lights of Eboli far distant on the right, and became sensible that the course we were pursuing, instead of bringing us nearer, was carrying us in a totally different direction.

No sooner had I satisfied myself of the correctness of this observation than I sprang suddenly forward, seized the treacherous guide by the collar, and presenting my pistol at his head, accused him of a design to betray us.

"You are over-hasty, signor," he replied, without allowing himself to be at all disturbed by the violence of my manner. "You are not acquainted with the path; I am!"

"Are not yonder lights those of Eboli?" I demanded, still holding my pistol in his face.

"They are!"

"And are we not pursuing a course directly opposite?"

"The path diverges in this direction, signor, to avoid a morass. Before we have gone another hundred paces it turns to the right, and leads direct to the town."

"If I find you have deceived us," I exclaimed, "it were better for you that we had never met! Lead on! and see you verify your words!"

Having loosened my hold, we again advanced; and I

still kept close to the Italian, determined to shoot him on the first alarm. We had not, however, proceeded far, when he stopped, and asked me, in a sneering tone, if I still thought he deceived us.

“Satisfy yourself, signor,” he said, “you see the path diverges here to the right.”

I turned slightly round to look in the direction he indicated, when, before I was aware of his intention, he darted like lightning from my side, and in an instant was lost among the tall brushwood and mimosa by which we were surrounded. A ball from my pistol followed speedily in the direction he had taken, but without the effect of arresting his progress.

Our situation now became extremely critical. The conduct of our guide left no doubt with regard to his purposes; and should his companions be anywhere in the neighbourhood, they could not fail soon to overtake us. Our only alternative, therefore, was to set off with all our speed; and, shaping our course as nearly as possible in the direction of the lights of Eboli, to effect our escape by swiftness of foot.

Accordingly, having reloaded the pistol I had discharged, we commenced our march at a rapid pace; and after toiling through deep marshy ground and entangled thickets for nearly two hours, we had at last the satisfaction of finding ourselves in the streets of Eboli. Towards ten o'clock we entered our inn, to the no small astonishment of our hostess, who had made up her mind that we should be murdered, and was apparently not a little chagrined that her predictions had not been verified. There cannot be a doubt that we owed our safety to the speed we exerted; for had we proceeded at our usual pace, the villains, who were certainly in pursuit, could not have failed to overtake us.

But this excursion was doomed to be an eventful one.

We were proceeding next day on our return to Salerno, and had diverged a little from the road in search of small birds, which we were shooting for the cabinet of a brother officer who was a great collector of natural curiosities. On a tempting grassy knoll, which formed a sort of open glade in the surrounding wood, we determined to rest for

a little during the heat of the day ; and we had scarcely seated ourselves for the purpose, when a tall, fine looking man emerged from among the trees and advanced towards us.

Predisposed as we were to consider every one of doubtful appearance as more or less connected with the banditti, who abound in this neighbourhood more than in almost any other corner of Italy, the looks of the stranger certainly did not tend to lull our suspicions. He was a strong muscular fellow, with a short rifle slung at his back, a most formidable moustache upon his lip, and a peculiarly fierce expression about his eye. Whoever he was, however, he was alone ; and having therefore no cause of alarm, we quietly awaited his approach.

“ Gentlemen,” he said, in a very civil tone, and with a low graceful bow, “ I am come to inquire how you chance to be within those woods with fire arms.”

“ Upon whose authority do you question us ?” I replied, taking upon myself the office of spokesman.

“ On the authority of his majesty, signor ; I am one of the royal gamekeepers.”

“ We are strangers here, sir,” I rejoined, “ and were not aware that we were trespassing upon the Royal Chase. We are, willing, however, to return immediately to the road.”

“ Quite enough, signor, quite enough,” replied the polite gamekeeper ; “ your explanation is quite satisfactory. ‘ This is a very hot day,’ ” he continued, “ is it not, signor ?—very !”

“ Very !” was my laconic reply.

“ Does not the heat make you thirsty, signor ? My palate is as parched as a buffalo’s hide !”

“ If I knew where a cup of wine could be procured,” I replied, “ I would willingly bestow it on you.”

“ Hard by, signor, in the corner of the wood, there is a cottage where you can have some excellent ; I have tried it more than once before now. Will you allow me to conduct you thither ?”

To this proposal I readily assented ; and we set off in company with our new acquaintance, who I soon found was a great talker, and very eloquent in the praise of his own valour. The conversation naturally turned upon the

banditti, of whose exploits so many fresh and appalling instances were daily occurring, and I inquired if he knew anything of their habits.

“I ought to know something of them, signor,” he replied. “During ten years of my life I was a bandit myself, and somewhat of a formidable one too, I may assure you. There was not a village or town in all Calabria, ay, or Campania either, in which my name was not dreaded. I had a band of fifteen men under my command, and many a rich booty we managed to drive; sometimes by plundering on the king’s highway, and sometimes by sacking villages. Ay, these were merry days! I recollect we once attacked a troop of a hundred soldiers that were guarding a wagonful of treasure on its way to Naples; every soul of them we put to the sword, and twenty of the rascals fell by my own hand. The booty was enough to make us all rich; but what then—lightly gained, freely spent. And talking of that, signor, here we are at the hut.”

He led the way into a miserable hovel, situated on the outskirts of the wood. Its only furniture was a small crazy table, and a few large wicker baskets, turned upside down, which served for chairs. A decrepid, but respectable-looking old man, was its only occupant; and on our calling for some wine, he produced a flask which he assured us we should find excellent.

As soon as the cup of our valourous conductor was filled, I inquired how he had chanced to quit his former profession.

“Why, the truth is, signor, he replied, “that after I had ravaged the whole country from Naples to Otranto, and from Otranto to the Straits, I began to find that there was not much left behind worth taking. However, I still kept at the old trade, more for the love of fighting than for any other reason. And as to fighting, I had enough of it; for the king sent out his troops, and the pope sent out his, and the emperor sent out his, all trying to catch me and lay me in limbo. Well! many a skirmish we had, and many a trooper did I send to his long home; till at last, finding they could make nothing of me, they were obliged to come to terms, and I agreed to leave off the trade on payment of a certain sum of money. So the money was

paid down on the nail; and I went to Naples, and saw the king, who was so much pleased with me that he appointed me on the spot one of his "*cacciatori*." However, I still think of the old times, and jump with delight at the sight of a drawn sword or the report of a musket. 'Tis very odd, but I was certainly all my life a very devil for fighting. I remember once, a certain general—I forget his name—was out in pursuit of me, with a troop of two hundred cavalry. I descried the whole cavalcade winding through the defile just beyond La Cava. Well! I had only ten of my men with me at the time, and I could easily have run for it had I chosen. But no! the temptation of so glorious a victory was too much; so calling my gallant fellows together, I addressed them thus: 'There are two hundred troopers, my men, coming down the pass to attack us. Now mind what I say. You will stop here till you get their heads in a line with the top of Fenestra, then pell-mell down upon them and rout them. I will take the general and twenty of the head men in my own hand; so see you don't interfere with them. If you do, I'll blow your brains out!' Well, signor ——"

But just as he had arrived at this part of his story, with which my companions, and especially the old man, seemed extremely diverted, a mouse crept out from the clay with which the roof of the hut was lined, and stood peering over the rafter immediately above the head of the valorous "*cacciatore*." Without intimating my intention, I quietly drew a pistol from my belt, took a deliberate aim, and fired. The mouse, with a quantity of loosened clay and dust, fell clattering down upon the slouch hat of the *soi-disant* bandit; who, without ever looking over his shoulder, dropped his gun, and bolted out at the door of the cabin, making but one leap between his seat and the threshold.

"*E morto! e morto!*" we all shouted after him. "*E morto!*"

"*E vero!*" said the old man, as he held up the murdered mouse by the tail, and shouted to the ranger to return, in the midst of repeated bursts of laughter.

"He is the most arrant coward in Christendom!" he

continued, when he observed that the fellow was clear off into the woods.

“So I thought,” I replied. “I only wanted to have the satisfaction of proving it.”

After spending a few hours at Salerno, we took the road by La Cava and Nocera, and reached Naples on the succeeding day without farther adventure.

On the evening of our arrival, there was a party at the ambassador's, where I had the pleasure of dancing with that elegant and delightful young lady, Mrs. H——. In the course of conversation, I gave her an account of our Pæstan trip, and she told me that she herself intended to visit the ruins in a few days. One short week had scarcely elapsed, when she and her amiable husband fell into the toils of those very banditti whom we had so narrowly escaped, and were murdered under circumstances of peculiar atrocity. The story is alas! too well known; and to dwell upon it here would be but to open the wounds of friends and relations, and cause them to bleed afresh. The delightful hours I spent in the society of this amiable young couple, who were beloved by all who knew them, I shall never forget; and to me their memory shall be forever sacred.

De la vita mortale il fiore e'l verde,
Così trapassa!

CHAPTER XVII.

A PIC-NIC AT MALTA.

“Steer to that shore!” they sail. “Do this!” ’tis done.

“Now form, and follow me!” the spoil is won!

THE CORSAIR.

As the time fixed for our departure from Naples was now near at hand, I drove out to take leave of my kind French friends at the Villa——. Our party there on this occasion was but a dull one; indeed for my own part

I will frankly admit, that farewell visits generally find me, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, "most exceedingly indifferent company."

At an early hour in the evening my calèche was announced, and I rose reluctantly to take my leave.

"Adieu!" said the old gentleman, shaking me cordially by the hand; "Adieu! et le bon Dieu vous garde!"

"Farewell!" said Rodolphe; "and do not forget the stag-hound pup you promised me. Remember, too, that he must answer to the name of *Lascelles*."

"Farewell!" said Annette; "we shall expect the long letter you promised us, speedily."

"Farewell!" said Pauline; "and be sure you let us hear from you the moment you get married. Take care, too, to tell us whether the lady be a *blonde* or a *brunette*!"

I promised to attend faithfully to their several injunctions, returned warmly their kind adieus, and expressed, as I best could, my sense of all the attentions I had received at their hands.

"It is rare," said I "to meet with so much kindness from total strangers."

"It is rarer still," said Annette, her long silken eyelash drooping over her dark eye; "it is rarer still to meet with a stranger, who, if he *has* received kindness, has also the good feeling to acknowledge it!"

The whole party accompanied me to the door; and as I looked back before the turn of the avenue hid them from my sight, I caught the last glimpse of hands and handkerchiefs still waving me adieu.

Early next morning we sailed for Malta. We had a prosperous and speedy passage; and it was not long till the steeples of the "honey-distilling island" hove in sight. Without the occurrence of anything worthy of notice, we soon found ourselves once more in our old quarters, beneath the Fort of St. Angelo.

The meeting with our former Malta acquaintances was cordial on both sides; and the officers of the —— regiment gave a grand entertainment in honour of our arrival. A large party dined in the mess-room; and, in the evening we adjourned to the house of a gentleman in La Valetta, where a splendid ball and supper awaited us.

In a word, good-fellowship and good-humour were the order of the day ; and our time passed delightfully in the mutual interchange of all those little civilities, and kindnesses, and marks of attention, which form, after all, the main staple of social intercourse. Our only rivalry was, who should contribute most to the harmony and kindly feeling which universally prevailed.

Dining, one evening with a gentlemen in La Valetta, I expressed a wish to make a short excursion into the interior of the island, in order to visit a few of its most remarkable curiosities.

“ In other words,” said my host, “ I suppose you mean in the most modest manner possible, to ask myself and some other of our friends to escort you on such a trip. Well ! for my own part I have no objections ; and I think a day may be spent very pleasantly in the manner you propose. But we can do nothing in the matter without the concurrence of the ladies. What say you, Harriet ?” he continued, addressing himself to his eldest daughter, a remarkably elegant young women of about eighteen “ what say you ? Mr. Lascelles proposes a pic-nic ; will you honour him on the occasion ? Come, Rosa ; what say *you* ?”

“ I shall have much pleasure,” replied the lively Harriet, her eyes sparkling with delight at the prospect of what promised to be so agreeable an excursion. “ I shall certainly have much pleasure in making one of your party, papa ; and I have no doubt I shall be able to prevail upon some of my friends to join me.”

“ And I,” said Rosa, “ if Mr. Lascelles will invite me, shall also be happy to add one to your number.”

A party was made up on the spot ; our route determined ; and a day fixed.

With merry hearts, and fully bent upon enjoyment, the different individuals who were to compose the *cortège* assembled at an early hour on the morning of the preconcerted day, at the house of our kind entertainer. A calèche, with a couple of servants, and a plentiful supply of materials suitable for an *al fresco* collation, had previously been despatched ; with directions to await our ar-

rival at an appointed spot on the shore, to the northward side of the island.

After an excellent *déjeûné*, which was partaken of amid such deafening peals of laughter, as evinced the exuberant spirits we all were in, we started on horseback; a party of nine, including four ladies. At the request of one of my shipmates, who was a great collector of natural curiosities, I had slung a rifle over my shoulder, in the hope of being able to bring him home some "specimens" for his cabinet.

Away we went, at a brisk hand-canter, along the somewhat indifferent road that leads to *casal Itard*; too much occupied with each other's society to bestow any great attention on the beauties or deformities of the surrounding scenery. The day was remarkably bright and fine; and the air was certainly the most balmy I ever breathed; being perfectly laden with the delicious aroma of the numerous odoriferous plants with which Malta teems in all directions.

As we kept on at a rapid pace, *casal Itard* was soon left in the rear; and it was not long till we stood beneath the venerable walls of the City Notable.

Here we baited our panting steeds, and proceeded, as in duty bound, to examine the antiquities and curiosities of which this ancient place exhibits so many. The Cathedral, and the *Banci dei Giurati*, were duly visited and commented on. We descended, too, to the Catacombs, the wonders of which have been the subject of so many minute descriptions; wandering through their labyrinth of corridors, which present on either side sepulchral niches for the dead of all ages, from the infant to the grown man, and which are of such extraordinary extent as to procure for the place the name of the Subterranean City. Had I been alone, I doubt not I might have found food for serious meditation while traversing the haunted halls of this vast Habitation of the Dead; where moulded the bones of so many generations, and where the dust of the haughty Greek, the brave Roman, and the wily Phœnician, mingle together in one common heap. As it was, however, the lively Harriet hung upon my arm; and I was

too much occupied with the living to trouble myself much about the dead.

A visit to the Grotto of St. Paul completed our tour in search of the antique ; and when we returned to the city we found our horses quite fresh, and ready for another start.

After a pleasant ride of about a couple of miles farther, we arrived at the Emptalhep Gardens, where we found one of the servants in attendance to take charge of the horses ; there not being even a bridle-road from thence to the coast beneath, where our refreshments awaited us. The walk, however, was by no means a very arduous one. A hill or two to surmount, a steep ravine to clamber down, and we found ourselves within hail of the dazzling white cloth on which our careful attendant had spread our repast.

The place he had fixed upon for this purpose was well selected. It was a small, but beautifully verdant spot, of rich enamelled turf, extending in front close down to the sea-beach, but inclosed on every other side by high hills and abrupt precipices. A small lively stream of crystal water brawled over its shingly bed at our feet ; and the dark low-browed rocks which bound the coast in every direction hung beetling over the ocean.

Here, then, we were, a merry party, assembled in a little green and sheltered nook of the iron-bound coast of Malta ; rocks and hills on every side ; a bright Mediterranean sky above, and the bright Mediterranean ocean, smooth and mirrory, before us. Everything, save the gentle rippling of the water and the sound of our own voices, which were reverbrated among the surrounding rocks, was still motionless.

One vessel only was within sight. She was a large-sized galley, having her canvass cut in a very peculiar fashion ; and it was evident, from the skilful manner in which she managed to catch every breath of air that was stirring, that she had at least one good seaman on board. She was going gently along under French colours, within about a mile of the coast ; so near, indeed, that we would have concluded she meant to put in to Goza, had she not been shaping her course more out to sea, as if she were

steering for Palermo, or some one of the other Sicilian ports.

"I should like to know who *that* is," said Neville to me; "and if our own craft had been within hail, I think she would have asked her the question."

"From her colours," said a gentleman of the party, "I take her to be a French galley engaged in merchandise. Vessels of her description are frequently seen in those seas, trafficking along the coasts of Greece and Sicily."

"She *may* be so," replied Neville; "but does not the cut of her canvass, Lascelles, appear somewhat of the strangest?"

"I am little acquainted with the rig of galleys hereabouts," I replied; "but I certainly think she has something about her appearance altogether rather rakish."

"I thought it odd at first," rejoined Neville, "that she should be upon the tack she is, so close in shore. But I observe she is now bearing up, and she may be some merchant craft after all."

She accordingly did bear up, and seemed to make for the port of Melecca. On this new tack, she was in a few minutes hid from our view behind the intervening rocks.

We now set earnestly to work with our luncheon; and the cheer provided for us was so excellent, and our appetites so sharp, that we made sad havoc among the cold fowls, pasties, and other eatables. A few glasses of champagne, washed down by some genuine La Fitte, added, if possible, to the exuberance of our spirits. The jest, the tale, the song went round; and the rocks on either side resounded, from time to time, to the loud peals of our laughter.

"Come, Harriet," said her father; "I know you did not forget to pack up your lute with the other *provisions*; and as most of our sides must be aching with this extravagant mirth, pray do what you can to make sensible men of us, and sing us that pretty air we admired so much last night."

The lively girl took the lute at her father's request, and sung us a native Maltese air, so plaintively touching, as to put an end for the moment to our excessive merriment.

"Nay, madam," said Neville; "you have really cast

a spell over us. Pray do us the kindness to sing something that will recal the spirits you have so unceremoniously dispelled—something lively let it be, in mercy !”

“I know few merry songs,” replied Harriet; “but if you will listen to one of the sea, your own adopted element, it is very much at your service.”

She again took the lute; and, striking a bold and spirit-stirring symphony, she commenced the following French ballad. The words, a copy of which I afterwards requested her to give me, on account of the singular coincidence which the reader will remark in the sequel, I shall here subjoin. She had recently received them, she said, as a great favour from Paris; the author* not having at the time made them public.

The following chorus, in which most of us joined, was sung immediately after the symphony, and at the end of each verse:

*Dans la galère capitane,
Nous étions quatre-vingts rameurs.*

CHANSON DES PIRATES.

On signale un couvent à terre;
Nous jettons l'ancre près du bord:
A nos yeux s'offre, tout d'abord,
Une fille du monastère.
Près des flots, sourde à leurs rumeurs,
Elle dormait sous un platane—

*Dans la galère capitane,
Nous étions quatre-vingts rameurs.*

“Très belle fille, il faut vous taire;
Il faut nous suivre—il fait bon vent.
Ce n'est que changer de couvent;
Le Harem vaut le monastère.
Sa Hautesse aime les primeurs;
Nous vous ferons Mahométane”—

*Dans la galère capitane,
Nous étions quatre-vingts rameurs.*

Elle veut fuir vers sa chapelle.
“Osez-vous bien, fils de Satan !”
“Nous osons !” dit le capitain.
Elle pleure, supplie, appelle;

* Victor Hugo, I believe.

Malgré sa plainte et ses clameurs,
 On l'emporte dans la tartane—
Dans la galère capitane,
Nous étions quatre-vingts rameurs.

Plus belle encore dans sa tristesse,
 Ses yeux étaient deux talismans ;
 Elle valait mille tomans.
 On la vendit à sa Hautesse,
 Elle eut beau dire ; *Je me meurs !*
 De nonne, elle devint Sultane—
Dans la galère capitane,
Nous étions quatre-vingts rameurs.

On the last repetition of the chorus, which was sung to a wild romantic air, having become accustomed to the strain, every one present joined ; and the notes reverberated far and near, from the echo of the overhanging rocks. Thanks having been returned to the fair songstress in a bumper of La Fitte, a momentary, but deeply silent, pause ensued.

“ Did you hear nothing ? ” said Harriet’s father ; holding up his hand as if to direct our attention to some sound that had alarmed him.

“ Nothing ! ” I replied, “ but the scream of some sea-fowl, which I hope are directing their flight over the top of the rock. I have a single ball in my rifle,” I continued, handling the gun ; “ and if you will allow me to rest it on your shoulder, Neville, I shall try if I can’t bring one of them down for our friend’s ornithological cabinet.”

“ Father ! ” said Harriet, tossing her lute upon the ground, and placing her delicate hands upon her father’s arm, while her lovely countenance expressed considerable anxiety—“ Father ! You seem alarmed ; what *did* you hear ? ”

“ Nothing, love ! ” replied her father. “ It may have been, as Mr. Lascelles says, a sea-fowl’s scream ; but it struck me as resembling a note I once heard under very different circumstances.”

Another pause ensued ; and I remained upon my knees on the grass, with the barrel of my rifle resting on Neville’s shoulder ; expecting presently to see a flock of sea-fowl take their flight over the top of the rock.

“There it was again!” cried Harriet’s father, starting to his feet, and breaking in his haste a bottle of champaign, part of which Neville was in the act of transferring to his glass. “There it was again! I *cannot* be mistaken!” and, as he spoke, a shrill prolonged whistle echoed among the surrounding rocks.

We looked anxiously round on every side; for the echo multiplied and reverberated the sound in such a manner, that we could not tell from what particular spot it originally came. Nothing was visible, nothing stirred; and the echo died gradually away. Again, however, it was repeated, louder and shriller than before; and scarcely had the echo caught the sound, when four men started into view at the top of a neighbouring rock, and stood out high upon its summit. Here they took up their position, motionless as statues; each bending upon one knee, and holding to his shoulder a carabine, which he directed right down upon our party. At the same instant, three others appeared round the foot of the precipice, and strode up deliberately towards us; drawn rapiers in their hands, and pistols at their belts.

There was little time to examine the general appearance of these men; but the coarse brown jacket without sleeves, displaying their naked brawny arms, and the short trousers extending no lower than the knee, the rest of the leg being left completely bare, were peculiarities which caught my eye in an instant. Round his waist, each wore a broad belt in which his pistols were stuck. The large undressed moustache, the uncut beard, and the general expression of ferocity in their countenances, could not be mistaken; **THEY WERE PIRATES!**

The effect which their sudden appearance produced upon our little party was quite electrical. From our recumbent or sitting position on the grass, we had all started to our feet; and a piercing shriek from the ladies reverberated among the rocks, as, completely overwhelmed with fear, they threw themselves upon their male companions for protection. Harriet clung round her father’s neck; and the timid Rosa, unmindful of decorum, leant upon me for support; her long auburn hair, which, in the trepidation of the moment, had become loosened from the

zone that bound it, hanging in dishevelled ringlets down her neck and shoulders. The broken fragments of our merry meal, empty dishes and overturned bottles, lay scattered at our feet. On the rock above, the four pirates still remained, fixed in their position they had at first assumed; their carabines pointed at our little group.

The variety of attitudes into which the suddenness of the event had thrown us; the frowning rocks around; the green plot on which we stood; the picturesque costumes of our unwelcome visitants, altogether formed a scene which might have reminded the spectator of some of the master sketches of Salvator Rosa.

But this was no time for admiring the picturesque. In one hand I grasped my rifle, and with the other I supported the fainting Rosa, whom I endeavoured to restore to calmness, by whispering in her ear such topics of reassurance as chance suggested. The three robbers were speedily at our side.

"Signori!" said one of them, in a garbled mixture of bad French and worse Italian, spoken with the accent of neither; "*Signori!—assoggetevi!—seguiteci!* Gentlemen, you must yield and follow us!"

"Never!" cried the father of the fainting Harriet; pressing his child the closer to his bosom as he spoke. "Never, miscreant! You take us not alive!"

"Resistance is vain!" was the Pirate's cool reply. "*We are seven*; I have but to make a signal to my comrades above, and *your* number will be reduced to *one!*"

"No!" replied the other; "cowardly craven as you are, you dare not take this advantage!"

"Provoke me not, signor! Remember, *I have but to raise my hand!*"

"Wretch! is not your object gain! Name our ransom; it shall be paid to you! Harriet, love," he continued, as he kissed his daughter's ashy cheek; "Harriet, you tremble!"

"Ransom!" replied the Pirate, with a sneer; "and who is to guarantee the payment? Four hundred scudi for yourself, signor—five for the lady on your arm—the rest you may have overhead for three!"

“Leave us, then ! I pledge my honour the money shall be paid !”

“Ay, signor ! but I must have some better security than your honour, untarnished though it may be ! I suppose you would have us moor our galley under the Fort of St. Angelo, and wait upon your honour to receive the money in La Valetta ! Or, would you send the guardship round to Tripoli to pay it to us there ! No, signor ! our best security is your own person, and the merchants at Cairo. Come, signor ! *Shall I raise my hand ?*”

During this brief dialogue, I had been bending over the fainting Rosa, who clung closer and closer to me, at every word the Pirate uttered ; nor had I once turned my face towards the haughty speaker. At his last threat, however, I turned hastily round, and presented my rifle at his breast.

“You seem the leader of these men, sir,” I said. “Now, mark me ! If you dare to make the slightest signal, I instantly drive a bullet through your heart !”

As I uttered these words, I kept my eye fixed firmly on that of the Pirate ; my finger pressing the trigger of the gun. His face became, alternately, deadly pale, and burning red. He gazed upon me for a moment after I had done speaking ; then, turning round to the men who accompanied him—

“*Andate di dietro !*” he said. “Fall back ! I wish to speak to this gentleman !”

The men did as he commanded them, and retired towards the beach. When they were gone, he again turned round to me, and addressed me in English, and with an accent truly vernacular.

“You need not fear, sir !” Will you retire with me a few paces ? I have something to say to you.”

I cast a look at Neville, which seemed to say, “*Shall I go ?*”

“Yes !” said Neville. “Leave your gun with me, and should the fellow attempt to play you false, I shoot him dead on the instant !”

The Pirate smiled at this threat, but made no observation.

Meanwhile, poor Rosa clung more closely to me than

before; and as I placed her gently on Neville's arm for support, she looked up in my face, her eyes filled with tears, and her countenance pale as death.

"O Mr. Lascelles!" she said, in accents scarcely articulate; "O Mr. Lascelles! do not go!"

"I shall return presently," I replied. "Fear not, Rosa; no harm shall befall you."

The poor girl shuddered, and hid her face in her hands.

The Pirate in the mean time had retired about twenty paces to the foot of the neighbouring rock; and there I speedily joined him.

"Well, sir," was my first observation; "what have you to say?"

"Something, sir, that you will gladly listen to. Look at me! You have seen my face before!"

"No!" I replied; "your features are entirely strange to me."

"Consider them more attentively! You *ought* to recollect them!"

"You must be mistaken!" I said. "I see you now for the first time!"

"It is you who are mistaken!" replied the Pirate. "This is not the first time that I have exchanged both words and blows with *Mr. Lascelles*!"

"Mr. Lascelles!" I repeated.

"Ay!" said the Pirate. "Look at me again; you see I am not slow at recognising you!"

Surprised to find myself so unexpectedly recognised, I scanned the fellow's person narrowly to see if I could bring him to my recollection.

He was a tall, powerful-looking man; with a countenance deeply bronzed, and a large cicatrized wound running diagonally across his forehead. The lower part of his face was completely covered with his black uncut beard and shaggy moustaches; and his long tangled hair hung out in thick clusters, from beneath the little red skull-cap which he wore. His brawny arms were bare from the shoulder, and his limbs naked from the knee downwards.

"Yes!" he said, seeing that my recollection was completely at fault; "I see you have forgotten me. And

no wonder; five years of a life like mine will work strange changes!"

"There is something in the tone of your voice," I replied, "which seems to awaken recollection."

"Ay!" he said; "like enough—like enough! The last time we met, you heard my voice, but did not see my person. Don't you recollect the last words I ever spoke to you? Mr. Lascelles, it was on board the *Hesperus*—at night—the words were these—*A File!*"

"The captain of the mizzen-top!" I exclaimed, as the whole circumstance flashed at once upon my memory—"Thomas Stubbs!"

"The same," he replied. "Now, mark me! You saved my life on one occasion at the risk of your own; I have now an opportunity of cancelling the debt I owe you. I shall presently call off my bull-dogs, and you and your party are free to depart."

"Name our ransom," I said, "it shall be duly paid."

"*Never!*" he replied. "*Your* ransom from *my* hands was paid long since!"

"But your men; will they not dispute your right to do this?"

"They dare not! Besides, I have a thousand scudi on board my galley; it shall be divided among them as your ransom. *They* shall be no losers."

"Name a place where I can remit the amount!" I replied.

"Away! away!" cried Stubbs, as he drew a small boatswain's whistle from his bosom, and sounded upon it three distinct notes.

The men on the rock, who had all the time kept motionless at their posts, disappeared instantly at the signal. Again the whistle sounded, when the other two men upon the beach sheathed their rapiers, and walked silently away.

"Mr. Lascelles," said Stubbs, "farewell! This was an unexpected meeting; and I am glad to have been able to show you that ingratitude at least is not one of my many faults. Farewell! we shall never meet again.

The poor fellow grasped my hand, while the ferocious expression of his countenance softened down almost to a

look of mildness; and having shaken it cordially, without waiting for a reply, he followed his comrades.

“You’ve managed the affair cleverly, Lascelles!” said Neville when I rejoined the party. “How the d—l did you get so easily rid of the miscreant?”

“Mr. Neville,” I said, “we have nothing to fear. We are now at liberty to depart; and I beg it as a favour that you will not question me farther on the subject.”

The servant now gathered up the fragments of our meal; and we forthwith proceeded to Emptalhep, where we found our horses ready. Towards evening, we once more entered La Valletta; though in a very different mood from that in which we had left in the morning.

Poor Stubbs! he was wrong in his prediction; we *did* meet again! Not many weeks afterwards, I encountered him in the streets of Gibraltar; but so changed that I could scarcely recognise him. He was handsomely dressed in the English fashion; his moustache nicely trimmed, and his well-brushed hair trained in such a manner as to hide the scar upon his forehead. He tried to elude me, but I was determined to address him; and taking him into an adjoining hotel, I questioned him closely as to the events of his life since he escaped from the Hesperus.

He informed me, that under the auspices of Karl Krause at Cape Town, he had engaged in the smuggling trade, and had been so successful that in a few months he contrived to amass a little money. With this he determined to make a trip to the Mediterranean, having heard much of the rich booty that was frequently obtained there. After a variety of adventures, he arrived at last at Algiers; where his talent, and his dauntless courage, and his excellent seamanship, raised him so high in the estimation of his brother pirates, that, with the little money he had, he soon managed to obtain a galley of his own, with a competent crew to man it.

He was returning from the coast of Greece to Algiers, when, in passing Malta, he discovered, with the aid of his glass, our little party on the coast, and immediately conceived the design of carrying us off for sale at Cairo.

“But *now*,” said I, “if I may judge from your dress

and general appearance, I would fain hope you mean to renounce this reckless and lawless course of life?"

Stubbs shook his head.

"If your business here at present," I continued, "is to get appointed to one of his Majesty's ships, or any honest trader, I shall do all in my power to assist you."

"Mr. Lascelles!" he replied; "as to my business here, I *know* myself what *that* is; and as to renouncing my profession—never, sir!—*never*!"

He shook me once more cordially by the hand; said he wished to God he could serve under me "in his own trade;" bid me farewell, and abruptly left the apartment.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A MARTINET.

Thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward!
 Thou little valiant, great in villany!
 Thou ever strong upon the stronger side!
 Thou Fortune's champion, that dost fight
 But when her humorous ladyship is by,
 To teach thee safety! Thou art perjured too,
 And sooth'st up greatness! What a fool art thou;
 A ramping fool, to brag, and stamp, and swear!

KING JOHN.

HAVING now completed my six years as midshipman, I was destined to undergo an examination on seamanship at Malta, previous to returning to England, where the usual scrutiny at Portsmouth College awaited me.

The College examination is a fair and straight-forward one. If a man be qualified, he is sure to pass; if he be not, he is almost as sure to be rejected. The candidates, therefore, before going on trial, may form a pretty accurate idea of the probable result, as every one must be more or less conscious whether or not he possesses the information requisite. He who in his own breast pleads

guilty to ignorance, may well tremble for his fate at Portsmouth College; he, on the contrary, who feels confident of being well acquainted with his duty, may approach the ordeal without the slightest dread. No unfairness, no brow-beating, no ungentlemanlike usage, is to be apprehended for those who are qualified; while those who are not, may hope for no favour or partiality to carry them through. Justice is the object of examination; openness and candour characterise the conduct of it.

But the ordeal which now awaited me at Malta was of a very different description. I was to be arraigned before the captains of the ships in harbour; and I do not say too much when I state, that the result of the investigation was a perfect lottery! No one, however high his qualifications, can be *certain* of passing a trial of this description; while at the same time the greatest dunces frequently come off with flying colours.

Very much, indeed, depends upon the individual characters of the men before whose tribunal the youngster is to stand: and if the majority of his judges chance to be possessed of the many good qualities which attach to the mere name of a British naval officer, he need be under no alarm. But unfortunately this cannot always be depended on. The passing captains are frequently martinets, who delight in brow-beating and perplexing the trembling youth before them; frequently they are coxcombs, who make him the mere foil to a display of their own seamanship; sometimes they are coarse, ill-bred, swaggering fellows, who terrify him out of what knowledge he may happen to possess, by harsh words, sour looks, and sounding oaths; and sometimes they are men who have "tempers of their own;" who are determined at all ventures to puzzle, and who, for this amiable purpose, are constantly throwing the vessel which the unlucky youth has raised in his imagination, into situations awkward enough to perplex an admiral. Such are the chances *against* the candidate!

On the other hand, a man may sometimes be fortunate enough to meet with kind, good-natured fellows, who will do all in their power to help and to encourage him; or with fools, who are too ignorant themselves to discover whether

he be ignorant or not; or with whimsical fellows, who may take a fancy to "the cut of his gib;" or with men who are fond of a joke, and who will pass him right or wrong, if he be fortunate enough to say a good thing, or to afford them any cause for the indulgence of their risible propensities. 'These are the chances in his favour!

I remember at Malta one unfortunate youth named Richards, the day of whose trial was fixed; and who, from the known character of his judges, had good reason to be anxious about the result. On the morning previous to his examination, I found him in a dreadfully agitated state; and in order to encourage and reassure him as much as I could, I took him out with me, and endeavoured, during a long walk, to explain to him any difficulties that occurred. After a good deal of questioning and cross-questioning, poor Richards, finding himself quite *au fait*, began to take courage, and to look forward with more confidence to the result of the morrow.

We had been perambulating about in this manner for nearly a couple of hours, and I was just about to accompany him on board, when whom should we meet, plump in the face, but one of his passing captains.

"Well, youngster!" said the skipper, addressing my companion; "so you are going to pass tomorrow, eh!—to try it at least, eh!—Very well! see you are prepared; for by G—d it shall be no child's-play! I'll work you, my boy; I promise you I will!"

"It will never do, Ned!" said the poor fellow to me, as soon as the captain was gone. "It will never do! I'm sure to be rejected!"

"Nonsense!" I replied. "Keep your spirits up, and never say die! Everybody knows that that fellow does not always bite when he snarls!"

"Well!" said the desponding youth, "it may be; but *you'll see I'll be rejected!*"

The eventful hour at length arrived; and poor Richards approached his fate with a palpitating heart. As there were five or six others for trial at the same time, they were apportioned among the different captains; each taking upon himself the examination of one.

"If you will allow me," said our friend of the previous

day to the senior officer ; “ if you will allow me, I should like to examine Mr. Richards ! ”

“ Certainly ! ” replied the senior captain ; and the poor fellow, as white as a sheet, was immediately called forward.

“ Now, sir,” said the captain, addressing him, and assuming a very grave and severe expression of countenance ; “ now, sir ; let us see what sort of an officer you’ll make ! You are the officer of the watch, sir, of the —— Frigate—don’t forget her name, sir !—there’s a heavy gale of wind from the south-west—do you hear, sir ; pay attention to what I am saying to you, sir !—I’ll lay my life you have forgotten already what point the wind was in !—mark me, sir ; for it is important !—the gale is from the south-west, sir ! remember, the south-west !—plenty of sea-room, sir ; vessel made all snug for the night, lying to under trysails ! do you mark that, sir ! under trysails !—Well, sir ; the captain comes on deck and says to you—observe what the captain says, sir !—he says to you, ‘ *Mr. Richards ! how’s her head ?* ’ You of course make the proper response ; after which, the captain putting his hand in his pocket, takes out a small leathern case—mark, sir ; a leathern case !—and presenting it to you, in an easy sort of a way, he offers you a cigar. Now, sir—answer me immediately, sir—which end of the cigar would you put into your mouth ? ”

The poor midddy, who, as the captain was proceeding with this address, was looking forward to some awfully formidable question, was so thunderstruck by this unexpected termination of the harangue, that, not knowing whether it was meant in joke or in earnest, he stood for a moment without opening his lips.

“ Come, sir ! ” cried the captain—“ quick !—which end ? ”

“ The twisted one ! ” replied the youngster ; who was fortunately well practised in the use of cigars. “ The twisted one, sir, if a Havannah ; and either end the same, if a Cheroot ! ”

“ Excellent ! ” cried the captain, throwing himself back in his seat in a roar of laughter. “ Capital, sir !—very well answered indeed, sir !—Gentlemen,” he continued, turning round to the other captains ; “ Gentlemen, I have

no hesitation in saying that Mr. Richards is extremely well qualified to make an excellent officer !”

The youth was accordingly duly passed ; and all his evil forebodings ended. This was one of the *lucky* turns of the wheel ; and we all congratulated him heartily on having drawn a prize.

When my own turn for trial came, my hopes were none of the brightest. Indeed, from the well-known character of one of the captains who was to officiate at my examination, I “booked myself” in the “*returned list*,” as a matter almost of certainty.

This man, whom I shall for the present designate Captain Dinmont, was a dreadful martinet ; detested and despised by all who were unfortunate enough to have any connection with him. The agnomen by which he was familiarly known in the service, was the somewhat flattering one of “*The Scotch Terrier* ;” and as far as person, manners, and temper were concerned, never was name more happily applied.

Captain Dinmont was a man of low stature ; and his little thick bandy legs were so short, as to bear no proportion to the length of his body. His arms, too, were short, with a slight bend outwards beneath the biceps ; and if he could be imagined, Nebuchadnezzar-like, upon all-fours, he would have formed no inaccurate representation of one of his canine namesakes of the genuine Skye breed. His countenance was sharp, and extremely ill-favoured ; his grey eyes were keen and fiery ; and there was an habitual grin about the corners of his mouth, which, tending to keep the lips somewhat apart, displayed a partial glimpse of a case of large and extremely ill-formed teeth.

His temper was hot, and easily excited. He was constantly snapping and snarling at everything and everybody ; and he was never known to speak a civil word, unless to serve some underhand purpose. In short, to use a slang, but in this instance a very appropriate phrase, he was “*thorough varmint* ;” and he would have matched with the fiercest of the Dandy Dinmont breed in every thing save courage ; in which, both moral and physical, he was woefully deficient. To complete his character, his

ideas of *honour* were none of the most scrupulous; moreover, he was a fool;

A ramping fool; to brag, and stamp, and swear!

With the fear of this awful personage before my eyes, it may be supposed that I had not much pleasure in contemplating my approaching trial; and I cannot tell how delighted I was, when I found that he was ordered to sail for Naples, on the very morning of the day appointed for the examination.

Congratulating myself at having thus luckily escaped the "*Terrier*," and having no such dread of any of the others, I began to pick up courage; and, indeed, I was so much relieved as to give myself little farther concern about the matter. But, alas! I was not destined to get rid of him so easily.

I was walking about with Neville, on the evening immediately preceding the eventful day, laughing and joking in the highest spirits, when I received an order from Captain Dinmont, directing me to be on board his vessel by day-break in the morning, as he intended to examine me before sailing, and to sign my certificate *if he found me qualified!*

Here was a sad turn of fortune. However, there was no help for it; I was obliged to submit; and in order to ascertain as well as I could "how the land lay," I determined to go on board of him immediately, and have a little private chat with one of his lieutenants; a very intimate friend of mine, and an extremely fine fellow.

"Well," said he, as soon as I had shaken hands with him; "I know what you're come about.—In a bit of a funk, eh?"

"A little," I replied; "but I hope you will be able to help me through."

"I can tell you one thing for your government," replied my friend. "I overheard our captain telling the first lieutenant that you were to be on board, and that he was to make you get the vessel under weigh, as a part of your examination!"

"Comfortable said I. "With a crew of whom I know nothing, and a man like Dinmont prowling over me, and

looking out on purpose to find fault ; this will be a very pleasant morning's exercise !”

“ Don't alarm yourself,” said my friend.—“ Dinmont does everything by regular routine and plan ; and I can very soon teach you, word for word, the whole ceremony of getting under weigh, as practised by himself.”

“ Indeed !” I replied.

“ Nay, more,” he continued ; “ I can let you up to some of his peculiarities. You know he is a fool—heaven forgive me !—and a coxcomb to boot. His *own* mode of doing everything connected with the business of a ship he considers the best ; and moreover, he thinks it impossible for any other man to do things exactly as *he* does them. He has, besides, certain favourite expressions, the use of which he considers a proof of consummate seamanship ; and I can teach you these to the letter !”

“ Then you propose that I should get the vessel under weigh in Dinmont's own style ; giving the same directions that he gives, and even using his own peculiar phraseology ? Don't you think the old fellow will be apt to get testy, if we attempt to show him up in this way ?”

“ He ! why the old fool will never see the joke ! On the contrary, if you perform your part well, he will set you down as an excellent seaman, and send you on shore with a flaming certificate. But, come along ; if you are an apt scholar, and don't take too much grog aboard during my tuition, I'll undertake to have you on deck by day-dawn, a proficient in the whole ceremony !”

Having, accordingly, been duly instructed by my friend, I was at my post by day-break, quite *au fait* at my part, and full of confidence.

Captain Dinmont received me with his usual gruffness ; grinning at me through his eyes like a hyena, and favouring me with a few salutation-oaths by way of foretaste of what was to come. When he ordered me to take charge of the vessel ; I of course looked very much astonished ; pretending to be taken quite unawares, and to be extremely embarrassed.

However, I made no objections, but set to work forthwith ; giving his own direction in his own words, and in the same routine order in which he would have given

them himself; dropping also every now and then one of his own peculiar phrases, as nearly as I could in his own gruff intonation. The officers on board, all of whom knew the trick, could scarcely maintain their gravity; but Captain Dinmont did not seem to have the slightest suspicion of the caricature. On the contrary, he appeared to be quite pleased with my superior seamanship; and frequently as the ceremony proceeded, and as I chanced to issue any order peculiarly his own, he would give one of his feline smiles and ejaculate, "*Excellent! By the great Immortal, very good!*"

The duty being completed, he signed my certificate without asking me a question; and inclosed it in a note to the other passing captains, which cleared me entirely from any "delicate little inquiries" on their parts. As I jumped over the side into the boat, my "friend and tutor" shook me cordially by the hand, declaring that I had acted my part to the life, "and done the skipper to a turn!"

I now only waited for a vessel to convey me to England; and in about six weeks, not a little to my chagrin, I was ordered a passage on board the *Acheron*, the very vessel of which the identical Dinmont was commander. She was daily expected from Naples, and was under orders to sail twenty-four hours after her arrival. I had scarcely time to take leave of my numerous kind friends at Malta, before I was hurried off; heartily cursing the ill fortune that doomed me to sail with so very unpopular a commander.

However, there was nothing else for it; and when I went on board, Captain Dinmont seemed very much pleased to see me; and he gave me the charge of a watch over the heads of two or three of his own midshipmen who were considerably my seniors. This arrangement, it might be supposed, was calculated to create an unpleasant feeling towards me in the midshipmen's berth. It had, however, quite a contrary effect; the youngsters whom I had superseded being too much pleased to get rid of a piece of duty, the most disagreeable certainly that I was ever called upon to perform.

The *Acheron* was most appropriately named; she was a perfect floating Pandemonium. Captain Dinmont, to his many other amiable qualities, added that of being

a thorough "*tuft-hunter*;" and he carried home a most motley assemblage of rarities, intended as presents to propitiate the smiles of the more influential and useful among his patrons and friends. Amongst other things, he had on board a perfect *menagerie* of all sorts of animals; antelopes, young wild-boars, Greek grey-hounds, and so forth. The pet of all, however, was a fine half-grown cub lion, which, when the weather permitted, possessed one-half of the deck for a couple of hours at a time, under the guidance of a man in the main-rigging, who held him by a rope fastened round his neck.

When this beauty was taking his exercise, the officer of the watch had to retreat to the poop; and what with the growling of the lion, the barking, roaring, and squeaking, of the rest of the collection, together with the incessant snapping and snarling of the *Scotch Terrier*, his situation was certainly anything but an agreeable one.

As for Captain Dinmont, heaven grant that I may never again have anything to do with such an insufferable martinet. His whole study and endeavour seemed to be, how he could make those who were under him as thoroughly miserable as circumstances would permit. Towards myself, his conduct was brutal in the extreme. Perform my duty in what manner I would, I was sure to get cursed and sworn at; and I was rated a dozen times a-day as "an ignorant booby," "a lazy cub," "a d——d good-for-nothing," and so forth.

However, there was nothing for it but "patient resignation." Indeed, under similar circumstances, it has always been my rule to wear the exterior of perfect submissiveness; and, keeping down as well as possible the haughty boiling of my blood, patiently, according to the old Scotch legend, to "bide my time." Often, when the ill-usage of the snarling "*Terrier*" was carried to some insulting excess, have I been tempted to retaliate upon the spot; but I still succeeded in keeping my indignation under due control; satisfied that the time when I would be relieved from his thralldom would eventually arrive, bringing with it perhaps the opportunity of revenging myself for his undeserved and ungentlemanlike treatment.

Yes! I cannot deny that on this occasion I did cherish a feeling of revenge; and those of my readers who may

think such a feeling bad or ungenerous, may perhaps be better able to sympathize with me, if they will make a single cruise under a low-bred, illiterate, ill-tempered superior officer !

For two months, including a week at Gibraltar, I had to endure his tyranny ; but I was equal with him before we parted !

At Chatham we were paid off, and the officers and ship's company were landed at the dock-yard ; whence, having received their pay, they were brought once more on board the Acheron, in order to be finally discharged.

On the evening previous to the day on which our discharge was expected, there was a great deal of conversation in the midshipmen's berth, as to the probability of the captain refusing to give us certificates of good conduct. The truth was, we had all come in for so ample a share of his abuse, that none of us could flatter himself with being in any way in his good graces. At all events, we were satisfied, that if he did not *volunteer* the certificates, we had no chance of getting them ; so we agreed among ourselves, as the most manly course, that none of us would condescend to ask for them. Indeed, to have done so, would merely have been to expose ourselves to a refusal, accompanied, in all probability, with a parting broadside of his abuse.

For my own part, I cannot say that I had much anxiety upon the subject. I was too well pleased to get rid of the snarling captain ; and I determined, as soon as I was at liberty to do so, to leave the ship. And, indeed, as the old horse in the fable said to the broken cart, " little sorrow there would be at parting ! "

My chest and other traps were already in the wherry ; and I was in the act of shaking hands with my messmates, when I was told that the captain wanted to see me.

" Confound the captain ! " I grumbled ; " can't he leave me at peace in these my ' last moments ! ' "

" What can he want with you, Widoe ! " said one of my messmates. " I trust no evil ! "

" Heaven knows ! " I replied ; " but I suppose I must go and see. "

When I reached the cabin, I found the captain sitting,

with his clerk opposite to him, at a table covered with papers.

"You are in a great hurry to leave my ship, Mr. Lascelles?" he said, in a sort of sneering tone, and turning half round to me as I entered.

I bowed.

"You have forgotten your certificate!"

I again bowed.

"There!" said he lifting a folded paper from the table, and tossing it towards me. "There, sir!—look at it!"

When I opened the paper, I perceived at the first glance that it was not written in the usual form; and on reading it, I found, to my utter surprise, that it contained a very high recommendation of me to any officer under whom I might hereafter serve.

"Well, sir!" growled the captain, when I had finished the perusal, and stood with the paper, which I had carefully refolded, in my hand. "Well, sir!—will *that* do?"

I again bowed lower than before; and advancing up the cabin, I very deliberately replaced the certificate upon the table.

"What the d—l's the matter now!" roared the captain, his eyes flashing with fury. "D—n the fellow, is he not satisfied!"

"Captain Dinmont," I replied, in a deliberate and collected tone, "I have been under your command for two months; and during the whole of that time, you have never ceased to abuse me for ignorance, inattention, and everything else that is unbecoming an officer. If I am in truth all which that certificate says I am I should have met with other treatment at your hands; if I do not merit the encomiums you have there bestowed on me, they are valueless in my eyes!"

A short pause ensued. Captain Dinmont's face became absolutely distorted with rage, and his whole frame trembled with agitation.

"Leave the cabin, sir!" he roared out, when his fury at last allowed him utterance. "Leave the cabin, sir! Start, when I order! You think you are now out of my control; but, by the Great Immortal, you shall find that I have some power over you *still*!"

I had scarcely rejoined my shipmates, when the boat which lay alongside with my traps was ordered to discharge its cargo ; and for more than an hour I was kept pacing about the deck, totally ignorant of what was to occur, or of the manner in which the captain would choose to vent his fury upon me.

At length the clerk, who had witnessed the fracas, came on deck ; and taking me aside, he told me that the captain had addressed a letter to one of the Lords of the Admiralty, in which he had denounced me as a person totally unfit to have the charge of a watch ; nay, more, he had stated that I was negligent, inattentive, and had been more than once found drunk on duty !

“ I assure you, sir,” continued the clerk, “ no one can regret what has occurred more than I do ; and I advise you to make an apology ; and request the captain to give you the certificate. Should the matter come to a court-martial, sir, I pledge myself to stand by you ; but I strongly advise you, as the best course you can adopt, to apologise.”

“ I only wish,” I replied, “ that I had kept the certificate when I had it ; and I might then have despised this disgraceful letter. Matters, indeed, at present wear a very threatening aspect. As to a court-martial, I fear I have little chance of obtaining a hearing against my captain ; and, as to apologising, I tell you once for all, *I never will !*”

“ If you will not do so in person, sir,” replied the clerk ; “ at least allow me to do so in your name. I think Captain Dinmont will still give you the certificate, if you will permit me to state to him that you are sorry for what has happened. Indeed, sir, I think this is your only chance of escaping very serious consequences.”

After a good deal of persuasion, I at length gave the good-natured clerk his own way ; permitting him to pursue what method he thought most likely to soothe the captain’s offended feelings, and to state my willingness to receive the certificate.

Accordingly, after the lapse of about half-an-hour, I was again summoned to the cabin. I found the captain still seated at the table, with a most sarcastic, malevolent grin

on his odious countenance; the certificate, and the letter to the Lords of the Admiralty, lying close beside each other before him.

“So, sir!” he said, in a sneering tone. “So, sir! you’ve come to your senses at last, have you, eh! By the Great Immortal, sir, it is well for you that you have! Well, sir! there’s the certificate; take it up!”

I eagerly laid hold of the important document, and secured it in my pocket.

“Now, sir; be off!—Good bye to you!”

He extended his huge paw towards me as he spoke; intending to honour me by shaking hands.

“Never, sir!” I replied, drawing back my hand, and rejecting the proffered civility. “Never, sir! Untold gold would not bribe me to give the hand of friendship to *you*! Sir, I cannot express the ineffable scorn I feel for you! The contents of that infamous letter before you are perfectly known to me; and I have only to say, that baser falsehoods never emanated from a human heart! Nay, sir; you need not storm! I am now beyond the reach of your resentment; and whatever steps your unmanly malice may incline you to adopt against me, you will do well to recollect that *I have got your certificate*, and you know what are the contents of that certificate. Represent against me as you will, and where you will; every statement you make to my discredit shall, by the evidence of this certificate, prove you to be a liar! You would do well, sir, for your own sake, to temper your malice, and remember this! Sir, I wish you a good morning!”

Captain Dinmont, like most other bullies, was a coward. He had not a single word to say to me in reply; and, leaving him to digest my address as he best could, I quitted his floating Pandemonium, and went on shore.

CONCLUSION.

My pen is at the bottom of my page,
 Which being finished, here my story ends.
 'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done,
 But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

BEPPPO.

GENTLE READER—for gentle you must indeed be, if you have patiently followed me thus far through my rambling narrative—I must now take a reluctant, and, I confess, a somewhat abrupt leave of you. If you have derived any entertainment from the perusal of the foregoing pages, I thank you for your good-nature in being so easily amused; and I congratulate myself on having succeeded, at least as far as you are individually concerned, in the main object I had in view. If, on the other hand, as is not unlikely, you have found my narrative tedious and dull, I can only apologise for the *ennui* I have caused you, in the words of Macbeth to King Duncan—

Being untutored,
 My *will* has been the servant to defect!

To those of you who consider that the “Scenes” which I have had the hardihood to lay before you are trivial and boyish, I have to say in exculpation, that most of them consist entirely of the reminiscences of my boyish days. Even at the time when I took leave of Captain Dinmont, as related in my last Chapter, I was little more than entitled to assume the *toga virilis*. I hope, therefore, that you will be inclined to make some allowance for this circumstance; as I am well aware that the many kindred associations, with which, to me, the recollections of those days are accompanied, invest them with an interest which they cannot possibly have for the general reader. I may thus frequently have made the mistake of describing events, which, though interesting to myself, may have ap-

peared quite the reverse to you. For this, I have to crave your clemency and indulgence.

Some of you, again, I doubt not there are, who have taken up these volumes, in the hope that you were to peruse a Novel ; and you must, consequently, have been dissatisfied, to find that they contain neither plot, nor design, nor *dénouement*. For the disappointment which, on this account, you must necessarily have experienced, I do not consider that I am at all answerable. I did not profess to write a Novel ; indeed, “if I would I could not.” My purpose, as I have already stated, was merely to describe, to the best of my ability, a few detached “Scenes” from my rambling life ; and those who expected to find in my pages all the engrossing interest of a highly-wrought and ingenious fiction, have only themselves to blame for their disappointment.

Lord Byron has well said that “Truth is strange, stranger than fiction ;” yet the events of real life, although frequently in themselves not devoid of much that is interesting, do not follow each other in that felicitous succession, and with that happy adaptation of parts, with which the invention of the Novelist knows how to arrange the incidents of his story. I have related the foregoing occurrences in the order in which they actually happened ; nor was it either my wish or my endeavour to weave them into what is technically termed “a plot.”

The characters, too, with whom, from time to time, a man meets in real life, however well qualified they may be, from their peculiarities, to figure in the pages of romance, cannot be *managed* like the characters of fiction. They have not their regular “entrances” and “exits ;” they do not come and go at the beck of an author ; nor can they, to use a nautical phrase, be “piped on deck” as occasion requires, each to enact his part in a catastrophe.

If, therefore, kind reader, you are disappointed that the several characters to whom I have had the honour of introducing you, have not been mustered to take their leave at the end of my story, I have only to say that the fault is not mine ! The beautiful Sophia I have never seen since I left her at St. Helena ; the pensive Annette I have never heard of since I bade her adieu at Naples ;

the sprightly Emily, my partner in our moonlight dances at Algoa Bay, I have often inquired about, but I have never been able to learn the subsequent events of her history; Stubbs, as I have already said, I saw for the last time at Gibraltar; with Neville and Strangways, indeed, I had at a later period many strange adventures, but down to the time when I returned with Captain Dinmont from the Mediterranean, I have told you everything about them that I thought would interest you; of the good old Mr. Settler, I can only say that he died in the interior of Africa, about a year after the breaking up of the Canvass Town establishment; of his son, the *çi-devant* first lieutenant of the Hesperus, I could relate some farther particulars, but I think it, on the whole, better not; and as to what concerns the gallant but eccentric Richard Wolfe, I did not again meet with him till fully two years after the period at which my present narrative closes.

Under such circumstances, you will readily admit the impossibility of my marshalling these personages before you at the end of my story; and all that I can do at present is to promise faithfully, that when I *do* see or hear anything of them, you shall be duly informed of the circumstance.

Some apology, however, appears to me to be due for the abrupt and somewhat unceremonious leave I am now taking of you. The truth is, kind reader, *writing* is neither my *fort* nor my hobby; and as long as there is a salmon to hook or a head of game to kill, small indeed are the attractions which pens and paper have for me. When I commenced my narrative, I was completely debarred from my favourite field-sports; nay, the weather was so truly British at the time, that I could not even stir abroad with either pleasure or comfort. Since then, however, a great change has come over the temper of the elements; and the sun is now shining so brightly, and the breeze blowing so freshly, that it becomes almost a sin for a man to remain within doors. Besides, the spring-fishing is commenced; and my time is so much occupied during the day, and I am generally so much fatigued at night, that I find a continuation of the *labores scribendi* completely out of the question.

It is true, indeed, that I have still a great deal to communicate to you. I have much to tell you of the glowing islands of the West; much of the Nabobs and Bashas of the East; much of the bleak Canada, and more of the Golden Dorado and the sunny Peru. The very names of those places are to me associated with many "Scenes" both humorous and pathetic; which, as they occurred at a later period of life, when my knowledge of the world was more extended, and my powers of observation considerably enlarged, I might perhaps be enabled to portray, with a faithfulness more graphic, than anything that the above rapid sketches can pretend to.

All this however, must remain in abeyance. At another time I may perhaps resume my pen; but at present my hand is quite cramped with holding it so long; and besides, the sun shines and the breeze blows, and I must be abroad to enjoy them.

One regret I have at breaking off my narrative so soon. I fear that many of my fair readers, in whose good graces I am very desirous to rank favourably, may be inclined to accuse me of fickleness and caprice in all that relates to *la belle passion*; and, in order to remove this impression, I should have liked to tell them how at last I fell in love, "even unto matrimony." I should have liked, too, to have introduced them to my wife—whom heaven bless, for she deserves its blessing—and I doubt not they would agree with me on the prudence and propriety of my choice; although, indeed, she was not won without —— but of this another time.

And now, kind reader, adieu! I have remained at home this morning on purpose to write to you; much against the remonstrances of old Ralph, who declares he never saw the river in "primer order;" and I have now, I think, said all that occurred to me. My friend Herbert has been out for the last hour; and Ralph has just come in to announce that he has already killed two fine salmon. The ladies of our party are to meet us on the river side at three, so I must be off to have a fresh-caught fish ready for lunch.

Therefore, kind reader, fare-thee-well. I leave you with regret; and, as I am perfectly confident that you are

a fine, good-natured, lively fellow, I only wish that you formed one of our party on the river today. Should you ever chance to be in this neighbourhood, I shall rejoice to see you. You shall have a hearty welcome, with as good cheer as I can provide; and I shall narrate to you, *viva voce*, over a bottle of old Rory and a cigar of the genuine Havannah growth, as many "Scenes" as you have an inclination to listen to.

"I ask your honour's pardon, sir," says Ralph who has just entered the room; "I ask your honour's pardon, sir; but if you don't make haste, I fear Squire Herbert will beat us! He has got the best part of the day, sir!"

"Have you put on the fly I selected, Ralph?"

"Yes, your honour; and a prime one it is, sir! *We're sure to kill him today!*"

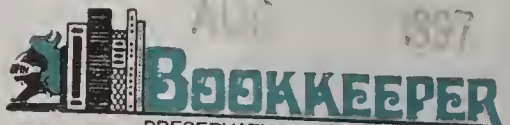
And so, kind reader, as Ralph is so impatient, to say nothing of myself, once more adieu! In return for your kindness in attending me, I trust without much tear and wear of patience, even to this my last paragraph, I have to wish you all happiness and all success in whatever you may undertake; nor can I conclude better than by quoting the words of our favourite Scott, and wishing

To all and each a fair good night,
With pleasing dreams and slumbers light

THE END.

Ca

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